652

HIGH-WAYS AND BY-WAYS;

OR,

TALES OF THE ROADSIDE,

PICKED UP IN THE FRENCH PROVINCES.

BY

A WALKING GENTLEMAN.

SECOND SERIES.

" I hate the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and says, 'Tis all barren." *Sterne.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL, *

652

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CARIBERT,

THE BEAR HUNTER.

O you kind gods!
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
The untuned and jarring senses, O wind up!
——————————Alack! Alack!
'Tis wonder that his life and wits at once
Had not concluded all.—He wakes; speak to him.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE TANJORE MAHA… SARASWATI MAHAL.

WILLIAM HENRY COPPINGER, ESQ.

OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

My dear Coppinger,

The first series of these Tales was inscribed to the friend at whose suggestion they were written; and this new attempt cannot be more fitly dedicated than to you, who have been the companion of so many of my rambles (though perhaps none of those here recorded) from the summit of the Pyrenees to the foot of Montmartre.

Those who understand the pains of authorship, be it practised on ever so trifling a scale, can appreciate the counterbalancing pleasure of paying such a compliment as I intend you, by putting your name in front of even this light performance. But those only who know you can comprehend the inadequacy of such a tribute, as a proof of my friendship.

Yours,
For the first time in print,
But as ever in heart,
THE AUTHOR.

10th December, 1824.

CARIBERT,

THE BEAR HUNTER.

CHAPTER I.

WIND, mist, and darkness are unpleasant accompaniments to a ramble in an unknown mountain district. They were all combined, to my great discomfort, the night of my arrival in the valley at the foot of Mount Arbizon, a secluded spot of the central Pyrenees. I was wandering, as usual, without any fixed purpose. In seeking the high places of the earth, I was uninfluenced by any motive of utility or ambition. I am a sorry botanist—

know nothing of geology, and was merely desirous of emulating the mighty monarch, who employed himself by marching up the hills, for the sole purpose of coming down again.

A walk of several hours had led me from the summit of the Pic du Midi, to the borders of one of the tributary streams which flow into the river Neste. The weather had not been favourable for observing the country. I had not seen a sun-beam during the whole day.—There had been a constant drizzling rain. Heavy clouds hovered close to the mountains, or sailed along their sides, and as evening closed in, seemed to settle on them, and wrap them round like mantles for the night. Every thing looked comfortless and drowsy; and myself and my dog took our tone from the scenery. He dodged along, with his nose down—but not to the purpose. He seemed instinctively to push it to the ground, but found no use in it—just as we scribblers, in a mood of dulness,

point our pen to the paper from habit, even when it has lost the scent. I had tried various methods, without success, to shake off the weight which oppressed me. I frequently took out my tablets and my pencil; but no sooner did something in the shape of a thought seem settling in my brain, than a vapour, like the floating clouds around me, was sure to pass over it, and wipe it out like a sponge. Then, as an izard* bounded past me I started up, examined the priming of my gun, resolved to be very vigorous—and dropped in a minute or two into the old mood. The day drawled on, and I could do nothing. I had no society with nature; I was myself shockingly bad company; in short I wanted an adventure,—and I found one.

Accustomed to the rough work of travelling, and not as ignorant of the ways of the people as of those of the country, I had but little per-

* The Chamois of the Pyrenees.

sonal care to oppress me. I knew I had only to present myself at the door of the first hut, to secure an invitation to enter; and, as I had no doubt of finding plenty of habitations in the valley, I took little note of time, and sauntered leisurely along. A thick wood of pines had hitherto concealed the river from me, and when I got fairly on its bank, it was discernible only by the light of some half dozen twinkling stars, occasionally visible. There are few things easier than to lose one's way in such a situation—but I was proof against that accident, for it was all one to me towards what point of the compass I turned. I only wanted shelter for the night; and after a long ineffectual search, I made up my mind that my object was unattainable. Nature itself never wore so inhospitable an aspect. The pine wood was far behind me; and if even disposed to trust myself to that common receptacle of the wolves and bears, I was by no means sure of retracing

my steps. I was in a pathless desert, with not a tree to relieve its monotony. The soil was covered with a short grass, soft as velvet, and free from the slightest incumbrance of wood or stone. I could not have desired a better bed, but the curtains of vapour were not quite to my taste. I turned round and round in fruitless hope of discovering even a rock to keep to leeward of, but at length resolved upon dropping down patiently where I was. Ranger, whose feelings seemed precisely parallel with mine, wheeled round three or four times, then suddenly plumped himself down in a circular position close by me, and was soundly slumbering in a minute. But I found it more difficult. I had not the same facility for rolling up my body and limbs, or for putting an extinguisher upon my senses; and though overpowered with drowsiness, it seemed impossible for me to sleep. The night was chill as well as damp, and my feet and face felt icy

cold. The river sounded sadly below me; and the rapid movement of the clouds without any visible power to urge them on, had something wildly supernatural in it. Fancies of all kinds flitted before me. I had a sudden recollection of every thing in unison with my situation; and half dozing, half awake, ran over the various theories of dreams and ghosts and all such unsubstantial wonders. I at length rocked my mind, as it were, to sleep, with thoughts of Ossian, of children of the mist, of shades of the heroes, &c.; and as my eyes closed I saw, in inward vision, the old blind bard seated on my breast, his grey locks brushing across my face, while he stooped over his harp, whose tones were tingling in my ears, as the wind murmured gloomily round us. I endeavoured to get rid of the pageant, which I felt to be unreal, but could not for some time succeed in removing. I strove to shake off the phantom; tossed my arms to and fro, and was at length

lucky enough to dislodge—not the son of Fingal, but my dog Ranger, who had crawled upon me to keep himself, (or perhaps me) warm; while the fringe of his tail was tickling my upper lip, the murmuring river playing the part of the wind, and the tinkling of a little sheep bell acting the dignified melody of the minstrel's lyre.

But the meaner tones of the real instrument were more grateful to my ears than a whole orchestra of aërial harpers. I sprang upon my feet, snatched up my gun, and descended rapidly towards the river, to the opposite side of which the bell was inviting me. After a short search I found a fordable passage, and quickly following my viewless guide, I came at last into the centre of a browsing flock of goats. I was too grateful, and Ranger too well trained to give them just cause for alarm; but they all took fright at our intrusion, and started, bounced, and capered, in every contorted attitude of at-

tack and defence. As we passed through them unmolestingly and unharmed, I looked for the hut of the goatherd, and soon hit upon a structure of truly primitive architecture. It consisted of four oblong blocks of granite, about three feet high, placed upright to support a shed scantily covered with straw, and walls of wicker-work kept together with leaves and clay, scarcely impervious to the keen mountain air. I poked at this building with the muzzle of my gun, and at its third face found the entrance. I called aloud several times, but got no answer. I then stooped down to ascertain if there was a tenant within; and was convinced that there was by affirmative breathings, short, quick and interrupted, as of a dreamer with Ossian's ghost astride his breast, or of a waking creature half choked with fear. I called again, but to no purpose: and feeling with the butt end of my gun, I was convinced it was opposed to a solid obstruction of head, body and limbs. I next

THE TANJORE SARASWATHI MAHAL

placed the gun against the outside, knelt down, inserted my hands, and seizing fast hold of a couple of naked legs, I hauled forth my prize, as an angler exultingly yet cautiously drags a huge salmon out of the water. It was a male mountaineer, of about a hundred pounds weight and twelve years of age, whose covering consisted of breeches and shirt, and a short woollen mantle fastened at his neck. He lay speechless and motionless, and might have thus silently persuaded me that he was dead, had I not both heard and felt his heart bounding in his breast, as a wild beast plunges against the bars of its cage. I raised him gently on his legs, and as he stood bolt upright, his hair erect, his face deadly pale, his teeth chattering, and every joint in his body shaking like a skeleton on wires, it was quite awful to look at him.

Finding all efforts of coaxing or scolding ineffectual to get from him a confession of life, I bethought me of that universal softener of hearts

and soother of alarms—the dram-bottle. I took my brandy flask from my pocket, and applied it to the mouth of the fear stricken youth. Never did the lips of a new born babe strain more naturally at its mother's breast—nor those of a languishing lover fasten more firmly on the cheek of his mistress, than did *his* lips glue themselves to those of the flask. They sucked in the whole neck, like Charybdis swallowing a fishing smack, and by the time I was able to force it out again, there was not a single drop at the bottom. After a moment's pause I observed the tip of his tongue slily insinuating itself out of one corner, and making a gradual circuit of his mouth, to gather up the dewy moisture which seemed asking to be taken in. His lips then began to gape and shut convulsively, as an oyster-shell opening for air. The next symptoms of life were the lazy rising up of an eye-lid, and a leer of good nature stealing out from under it. His horrent locks then

sunk down from their elevation, and lay smoothly on his forhead: his trembling had ceased; his whole countenance seemed at once brightening and softening; and in a minute or two he bravely gazed at me, with twinkling eyes and open mouth; and seeing me to be an absolute man, not a monster, he burst into a loud and hearty fit of laughter.

Finding that he was fairly alive, and able to shift for himself, I loosened my hold—but was scarcely less shocked than before, at seeing the poor wretch reel from me, stagger forward, roll sideways, trip and stumble, till he came at last to his fitting equilibrium by dropping down on the grass, thoroughly drunk. After several attempts to keep him firmly on his legs, I abandoned all notion of success, but making him, by a mixture of French and Spanish, comprehend my wish to discover a road and a house, he began to pilot me, just as a porpoise rolls along before the prow of a ship. He plunged for-

ward up and down hill, with most surprising and grotesque agility, tumbling heels over head, shouting with all his lungs "Camino!" "Casa!" "Eau-de-vie!" and other incoherent but appropriate words, until in about a quarter of an hour, I perceived a little hamlet, of three or four rude habitations, from one of which a light streamed forth through the open door. My guide had method in his madness; for, in spite of his whispering tone and inveterate hiccup, he made me understand plainly enough that I was not to betray to the family within the house his abandonment of the goats or his patronage of the brandy. I assured him of my discretion; and he took a silent leave of me, with a nod, a wink, and his finger on his lips, as he staggered off in many a deviation from the right line.

Under the rude shed attached to the house, I observed a little pony and a couple of mules, which latter I knew at once, by their size and caparisons, for Spanish. A strong odour of

tobacco betrayed the contents of the bales beside them; and I was not slow in conjecturing that the owners, a couple of unlicensed dealers from the other side of the mountains, were enjoying the hospitality of the house. Satisfied as to the nature of the company within, I approached the door, and was met by the host, a middle-aged man, who received me without any embarrassment, and seemed marvellously at his ease, considering him to be an encourager of illicit traffic. But these mountaineers have no misgivings regarding any one who presents himself out of the costume of a Gendarme. An eagle in a large wooden cage which hung close to the door, darted out his beak and slapped his wings at me, hospitably, as I was willing to suppose. I entered, and sat down without ceremony beside the fire. Two girls, the one of twenty or thereabouts, the other four or five years younger, were occupied in clearing away the remains of supper. I had no appetite but for repose, so I

refused the invitation to partake their homely refreshment; but they found Ranger a ready assistant in getting rid of the scraps. On a low bed in one corner of the room, lay two men sleeping, wrapped in cloaks, handkerchiefs tied round their heads, and every line of their swarthy faces speaking Spanish, as plainly as physiognomy could speak. Their brown, broad-leafed hats, with red worsted bands, were flung on the ground, and contrasted strongly with one of a different cut and pattern, which to my great amazement decorated a long peg stuck in the wall. It was no less than a white beaver, with a green-lined brim, about the depth of a supper plate's, such as the beaux of the Boulevards wear perched upon their topcurls, but probably the first and last of its kind ever exhibited in the parts where I fell in with it. A whitish-buff-coloured glove of the true Parisian texture dangled from within, almost as gracefully as if it had contained the taper fingers of the petit-

maitre who owned it. Negligently reclining under it, was a loose coat, with its wadded silk flaps flying open as naturally as if it had been on the back of the man, instead of that of a chair; and a pair of delicate Spanish leather boots, with high heels and brass spurs, made up the rest of the visible costume of a gentleman who, my host informed me, occupied the bed in a little closet partitioned off the room where we sat.

Strange anomalies these, thought I, as I viewed the rustic furniture of the room and the rude costume of the family; — and I, no doubt, looked what I thought, for the host said in his rough way, "Droll enough, sir, isn't it, to see all this finery in our poor hut? But if you were to see the creature it belongs to, you would stare even wider than at it."

"Some traveller from Paris, I suppose?"

"Yes, that it is. I believe no other place could turn out such a being. We were grievous-

ly puzzled at first to know his sex as he came trotting his pony up the valley, with his fine silk coat and wide pantaloons flaunting about him, and his long curls dangling on his face. My poor girls will never get over their envy of his dress, nor care any more for the scent of the wild flowers after his perfumes."

I looked at the daughters to see if their countenances pleaded guilty to this charge of vanity. The younger giggled, tittered and skipped about, played with a tame izard which was striving to sleep in a corner, took up a bit of the silk-lined coat, pointed to the little hat, and replied to my gaze by a look of great archness; but the elder sister seemed quite heedless of it. She pursued her employment mechanically, with nothing observable in her manner, but abstraction, and, as I at first thought, stupidity. I turned to the father, and was about to remark that he had no apparent reason to include her in his opinion,

when he stopped me short, with a shake of the head and a heavy sigh, addressing his daughter, "Come along Aline, cheer up, look gay my girl. It is not every day that we have such visitors in these wild parts. Do give a smile or two to this gentleman, and your poor father."

His look, as he spoke, was most affectionate. A smile of the tenderest melancholy spread across her face; she raised her large hazel eyes full upon him: they filled in a moment with tears, and to avoid their overflowing, or at least our observation of it, she hurried towards the door. I never saw so sudden a change of countenance—of feature almost. A face which at first appeared scarcely worthy of remark, not plain certainly, but still not pretty, was by one simple touch of sensibility transformed in an instant—*for* an instant only it is true—into one of infinite charm. I shall leave my readers to discuss the question whether this susceptibility does or does not constitute beauty.

I do not think it necessary to give a more accurate description of Aline. I may once for all say that the women of the upper Pyrenees are commonly plain, coarse, and unintellectual. The admirer of beauty and variety must seek them in the face of nature, not of *the sex*. This general fact has, however, like all others, its exceptions; and I have met a few;—one in particular pre-eminently remarkable, and which I hope on some future occasion to introduce to my readers. But Aline was not precisely such, as far as personal appearance went. Her figure was tolerably good, and was, like her face, susceptible of very graceful movement when put in action by some powerful mental impulse. Such, for example, as when she started from the fire-place towards the door, to hide her emotion from her father and me. She had many of those moments. I wish my readers had seen her just in *one* of them, and they would have been quite convinced that she was fit to be the

heroine of a mountain adventure—or of any adventure which involved in its course deep feeling, and uncommon delicacy of mind. Her sister was a mere child, sprightly and thoughtless, and shewed no evidence of having caught the tone of Aline's disposition.

I was so taken by surprise by this abrupt display of feeling in such a situation, and so certain of its being connected with matter of considerable interest, that I was not disposed to offer any check, in the way of enquiry, to the current that seemed flowing so smoothly. As Aline stood at the door with her back towards us, and appeared to wipe her eyes with a corner of her apron, her father looked at her and me alternately; and when he spoke he might be thought to address both us and himself collectively, like an actor soliloquizing before an audience—only that his tone and expression were perfectly, and without premeditation natural.

"My poor girl! I see there's no hope for you as long as he lives. Unfortunate wretch that he is, to break such a heart as hers! Poor devil, it is not his fault neither! We are miserable wretches all of us. But God forgive and pity him, he is worst off of all.—When is there to be an end of this suffering!"

"My dear father," cried Aline, approaching him, "don't speak in this desponding way. It makes me quite unhappy. And you know this gentleman is not acquainted with our obscure distresses. I assure you I am quite cheerful to-night. Something tells me we shall have good news."

"God grant we may, for his sake, poor fellow, as well as yours," replied the father, kissing her. Then, addressing me, "You must excuse me, sir. When a man's heart is full of one great grief he forgets what is due both to strangers and friends. But we must not worry you with our misfortunes. Do take something."

I declined once more; and, anxious to relieve the evident embarrassment of Aline, I returned to the subject of the sleeping Dandy. I could however get no information further, except that he was half dead with fatigue, when he arrived at sunset, after his ride from Bagnères de Bigorre, the Cheltenham of the Pyrenees, where at one time or another during the summer season, one is sure to meet a large proportion of the idleness and bile of the higher class of French society.

"What is his object in coming here?" asked I.

"To see the hills, I believe," replied my host. "It is that which brings all you gentlefolk here. God knows what charm our rugged mountains, dark forests, and brawling rivers can have for you. The inhabitants are unfortunate enough in being forced to live in such wilds; but to come into them by choice, and find pleasure in climbling rocks and glaciers and the like, is

something we don't understand. Isn't it, Aline."

"Perhaps, father, it would be as bad to be *forced* to live in Paris. Choice and necessity make all the difference, I think."

"That they do indeed," said I briskly; pleased with the good sense of a remark that from other lips might have sounded common-place, but which surprises one coming from a girl of the Pyrenees; and I was, besides, in a mood to give its full share of value to every word uttered by this particular one.

Much inclined as I had been to sleep ten minutes before, I was quite roused and excited by my observation of this father and daughter, and my conjectures relative to her. I soon became satisfied that I could not close my eyes for the night; and there was certainly no very great incitement to repose in the crazy chair on which I sat—the three-legged stools of the rest

of the party—or the earthen floor of the hut—the only varieties of accommodation to be had. I asked my host whether he and his daughters had given up their beds, and left themselves without resting-places. "Why, yes," said he, "we have. The girls could not refuse theirs to the poor gentleman within, who appears very rich, and generous withal. As for me, I am used to such matters. When a man is connected with smugglers, he must be up at all hours; ready to give room for friends, and look out for enemies."

"You avow yourself then to be connected with yonder gentlemen?" said I, pointing to the sleeping Spaniards.

"To be sure I do," replied he. "We all are. How could we live without being so? If I, in this miserable spot, were not to traffic a little in Spanish wool and tobacco, what should I do in winter-time with my family? We might get on in summer gaily enough, while

the flocks can feed on the mountains, and we have easy communication with the low grounds. But when the snow chokes us up here, and covers the pasturage, we should starve if we had not a little store laid by from our *industry* in the smuggling line."

"But are you not afraid of detection?"

"Not a bit. The government wouldn't think it worth while to pursue an individual. To root out the trade, they must depopulate the Pyrenees. And it seems, after all, as if heaven put us here on purpose for it, just as it permits our tyrants to make the laws, which we could not live without transgressing."

A little further conversation ended in his expressing his regret, for the twentieth time, that they had no bed to offer me just then; but he told me that if I could content myself for an hour or two longer in my chair, his friends would be by that time sufficiently refreshed to pursue their journey. His house was close to the

Spanish frontier, and they had a couple of leagues further to go to the depôt on the French side. They were obliged to be there before day break, and would soon be in motion, when I could replace them and repose myself.

I acceded to this plan very readily, but again expressed my anxiety about his daughters.

"Make yourself easy about them," said he. "Look round there." I did so, and saw stretched across the foot of the bed where the Spaniards lay, the youngest girl, sound asleep. "We are not nice here, you see," said the father. "Our poor little Mannette is easily satisfied with a resting place. As for this dear girl, who sits knitting beside me, the best feather bed in the king's palace could not tempt her to sleep to-night. Ah! sir, if you knew the weight that lies at her heart, you would only wonder how she holds up her head at all."

Here Aline could not restrain a long drawn sigh, the first that had escaped her. She ap-

peared uneasy, and cast her looks towards the door. "Ah! it is of no use to look out yet, Aline," said the father: "Claude cannot possibly be back before midnight."

"Yes, yes, he could indeed, if he had good news to tell us. A happy message, with his fleet limbs, would have shortened his way across the mountain."

"Wait patiently a little," replied he. "In another hour you may reckon on his coming. It is now about eleven, I think;" looking out, under his hand, at the few stars which were discernible. I looked at my watch, and found him right within ten minutes.

"Well then, father," resumed Aline, "since I must endure another hour's suspense, I insist upon your lying down till then. Senor Manuel and his friend will not start before one o'clock; and I am sure this gentleman will excuse you, and content himself with my company until Claude arrives."

I need scarcely say that I was delighted—most innocently so, at the prospect of this midnight *tête-à-tête*. I wanted to know more both of Aline and her story, and I reckoned on making great progress in my acquaintance, if we were left chatting over the fire together. I therefore added my persuasion to the entreaty of Aline: and the father, prompted also, perhaps, by the heavy whispering of sleep, which seemed stealing insensibly over him, consented to remove himself to the shelter of one of the sheds without, where a heap of straw and a blanket (which latter he carried out with him) afforded all the indulgences necessary to the repose of a hardy mountaineer.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAPTER II.

Left to ourselves, Aline and I began very quickly and cordially to enter into conversation. The situation was somewhat singular, and rather amusing; but as she seemed to feel no awkwardness in it, I had, for my part no objection to keep watch with a single female companion, amidst four or five sleeping neighbours mostly of my own sex. We began to talk on subjects of a very general nature, such as the pleasures and privations of a mountain residence compared with those of a town; the occupations of the inhabitants of the hills; the life of the smugglers, and so on. Nothing broke in on our chat but the occasional snoring of the two

Spaniards, which being an interruption that was always an assurance of security, there was no secret that might not have been safely disclosed, had we been very communicative. Now the fact was, that Aline was free enough on common subjects, but seemed overcome with a timid reserve when any of my hints or allusions bore in the least upon her own situation. I made several efforts to lead to this, without saying any thing actually startling to her diffidence, but a cloud of deep sorrow seemed immediately settling on her brow, which it required the ingenuity of several minutes to dissipate. Half an hour passed over in this way, and I saw plainly that the attention of my companion was gradually waning off from all I said, and that her nervous anxiety increased with every minute that brought us nearer to midnight, the hour for the expected arrival of her messenger, whoever he might be. As the time approached she became more and more uneasy,

made several excuses for moving towards the window and door, from which she looked out as if her gaze would have pierced through the thick mists that hung over the valley. All this was beginning to make me extremely fidgetty too. I could not avoid sympathising with sensations that were evidently so acute, nor resist the impulse that prompted me continually to start up from my chair, go to the door, look out and listen, as if matter of personal moment to me was borne upon every breeze. While I was in one of these involuntary acts of observation—my eyes straining with unaffected earnestness—I heard a shrill whistle blown not far from the house. I started back abruptly towards Aline, and could scarcely refrain from crying out to her that it must be the signal of her messenger. But I was checked from the utterance of a word, by observing the sudden change which her whole appearance had undergone. It was one of those electrical moments which wrought wonders in

her. The flush of agitation which was on her face a minute before, was now succeeded by a deadly paleness, and the intense anxiety that seemed only waiting for the signal to make her spring forward to meet her messenger, had given place to a perfect state of immobility. She appeared quite unable to stir. I approached to offer to help her from her seat, but she motioned me to stop: and, after a few seconds, passing her hand across her brow, and then putting it to her heart, as if a pang had connected the one with the other, she rose up, and giving me one of her deep speaking smiles, she moved firmly towards the door.

As soon as she was observable from without, I heard the voice of a man address her in an under tone. From her reply it appeared that he had invited her to quit the house. "No," said she, "I cannot. You may come in. My father is with the horses, and there is no one awake but a traveller before whom you may

speak freely, I am sure." The figure of a man was observable close to her, as she continued: "Now I entreat you, Claude, to tell me his true state in as few words as possible. I am prepared for the worst: is there any hope?"

"My dear Aline, there is always hope, you know, to the last."

"Ah! do not torture me," exclaimed she, her late agitation reviving once more: "I can endure any thing but suspense—Is he recovered—quite recovered? Tell me, Claude, tell me all—even if there should have been a relapse."

"Nay, but my dearest Aline, don't agitate yourself—a relapse, you know, may not be so bad as matters were before."

"Oh God! then he has had a relapse!" cried she, and she sank on the arm of her companion. "Why yes," said Claude, "he has—I must confess it—but the fit may not last—It may be slight—Hope for the best, dear Aline."

"No, no," exclaimed she, "there is no lon-

ger any hope. After three relapses how can I hope? Whom did you see, Claude? His mother was it? What does she say? Tell me all."

"Why, no," replied Claude hesitatingly, "I did not actually see her—But—"

"Whom then?" abruptly asked Aline.

"Be composed, my dear girl, and I will tell you all. I saw *him*. The truth must out—he has *escaped!*"

At the last word of this sentence poor Aline could no longer repress her feelings. A shriek burst from her, and she rushed out of the house, wringing her hands in bitterness of suffering.

This shriek, though more than half suppressed, and less like the loud expressions of terror, than the heavy echo of a breaking heart, was enough to rouse the whole society of sleepers. The Spaniards both sprang from their bed, throwing down Mannette who ob-

structected, their passage as she jumped into the middle of the floor. Seeing no one near them but me, a stranger, (for Claude had darted from the door, following the movement of Aline), these fierce mountaineers instantly seized each a weapon of offence—one grasping his ice hatchet, the other a pistol from beneath a bale of wool that had supported their heads. At this moment the host ran in, interposed between me and the smugglers, and quieted them by a word. He that held the pistol exclaimed in Spanish. "All's right then, is it? We're all friends? Good! But to show you and your company, master Moinard, that I'm well prepared for treachery should I meet it, stand out of my way a little."—With these words, striding to the door, he fired his pistol in the air, and was adding in a voice almost as loud as the report, a sentence which began with, "A brace of bullets"—when he was interrupted by piercing screams from the closet of "Murder! Thieves! Fire!" ut-

tered, to my inexpressible surprise, in broad, downright English. The Spaniards, at this new alarm, darted without a moment's hesitation towards the closet, and burst open the door; I followed, with the host, Mannette and Ranger, who joined his voice to the common discord, and close on our heels came Aline, attracted to the house by the report of the pistol, with her companion Claude, as fine a specimen of a mountain hunter as an artist or poet could wish to sketch from. But I shall give his portrait by and by.

On entering the closet, the figure which presented itself was irresistibly risible, and the whole scene, following so quick on the previous situation of my heroine, was a new proof of the close neighbourhood of the sublime, or at least of the affecting to the ridiculous. We every one of us (that is, the Spaniards, Mannette, her father and myself,) burst into a fit of loud laughter; and were the pencil of Cruikshank

to fill up the rest of this page, I am quite sure that its illustration would make my readers join in a chorus of their own.

Close to the foot of a low and little bed without curtains, with his back against the wall, stood in a most unexceptionable boxing attitude, one of the plainest visaged and lankest figured men that had ever met my observation. His long legs almost reached from one end of the closet to the other, a green slipper was on one foot, the half of a white jean pantaloon twisted hurriedly about the other, which was as bare from the ankle as its fellow, his shirt open, a silk handkerchief half pushed from his temples, surmounted by a few pointed locks of red hair, and bristling out beneath it a profusion of papillotes in which he had arranged his curls. His long face, staring eyes, open mouth, and pendant mustachios, completed the embodied appearance of Cervantes' immortal imagining. But he wore in his whole aspect and attitude a show of that

courage and defiance of danger, which was only laughable to the rest of the party, but which really gratified my national pride as a new and undoubted display of what is common to ninety-nine out of every hundred Englishmen, however ridiculous they choose to make themselves at home or abroad.

Seeing that my countryman, for such he certainly was, although I knew him not, had really nothing of the perilous in his situation, and satisfied from the droll assemblage of French and English in his exclamations, as he vociferated to us to "come on all and attack him if we durst," that he had betrayed himself for a Briton, and so screened himself both from insult and injury, I was resolved not to interfere further, but to leave him to work out his own way; while I abandoned the episode of which he was the hero, to follow the main thread of an adventure more congenial to my actual state of mind.

I therefore addressed Aline, who saw with her prompt glance the true aspect of the case, and glad to escape from the worry of explanation that awaited her in the house, she accepted my advice to retire from the scene accompanied by Claude and me. Reliance on fair appearance seems so much more natural than distrust, to minds unspoiled by worldly feeling, or to those who are glad to break away from it to the general sympathies of nature, that I was not at all surprised to find myself almost firmly established in the confidence of Aline, and quite self-satisfied that I was her friend, upon even our short acquaintance. A person of her quick perception must have instantly discovered that I was impressed with sentiments towards her at once warm and disinterested. With such a feeling, she seemed to think it quite unnecessary to make any parade of admitting me to a share in the conversation which began between her and

Claude, and I, on my part, thought it quite natural that I should join in it. Claude appeared to have no more hesitation than I; so we all three sloped off by a spontaneous movement, to a sufficient distance from the deep notes of the Spaniards' mirth, the shrill treble of Mannette's laughter, and the hoarse bass grumbling of the enraged dandy.

"What direction did he take?" asked Aline, in a voice of mournful questioning, and as if her mind had returned without any effort to the subject of her distress, and forgotten with equal ease the recent bustle.

"When I last caught a glimpse of him," replied Claude, "he was wandering about lake Escoubous; but," added he, in a tone more depressed, "I think he was making towards the Tourmalet."

"Oh Heavens," cried she, "in that case I must not lose a moment. For the love of

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

God, Claude, tell me—how did he escape from home, and are you sure he thinks of going to the fatal ravine?"

"Yes, yes, I am quite certain of that. As for his escape, I first heard of it from Simon Guilloteaux of Bastan, whom I met soon after I left you this evening. He told me that in passing by poor Madame Larcole's cottage he thought he would just step to the window and ask after Caribert. He did so, and while he believed the poor fellow was lying asleep, he said in a half whisper to the mother, who sat watching by the bed, that the bear hunters were gathering through the parish for the chase to-morrow. No sooner had he said so, than the unfortunate Caribert, who had had the fit coming strong on him all the day, and had just lain down exhausted an hour before, sprang up, and half undressed as he was, rushed towards the window, leaped into the garden, and forcing past Simon, who strove in vain to stop him, he darted

off, hallooing in the old way, "To the chase, to the chase! Come, father, come!"

"Alas! alas!" sobbed Aline, who could keep silent no longer, but covering her eyes with both her hands wept aloud, while Claude and I assisted to support, but made no effort to console her.

Here then was the whole sad secret of the poor girl disclosed to me at once, without question on my part, or formal disclosure on hers. There she stands (said I to myself,) mourning her lost lover, lost to every thing that makes life worth keeping, to reason, affection, and it would seem even to the hopes of self deceiving attachment; for her suffering is that of despair, covering the green grave of buried love. But then, thought I, the cause? The father exclaimed in his soliloquy awhile ago, "God forgive and pity him!" He accused this wretched maniac (for it must have been him) of having broken her heart: he said there was no peace for her while

he lived. Why pray for forgiveness for this witless sufferer? Why charge him with her misfortune? By what act did he cause it? Why were her griefs to end with this poor Caribert's life? The death of a beloved sufferer sets the seal upon hope, it is true, but not upon sorrow. Such were the questions and reflections that involuntarily sprang up in my mind. I was resolvedto neglect no fair means for their solution.

When this last irresistible burst of Aline's grief had subsided, and her mind seemed quite made up to the course she meant to follow, she addressed Claude with a composure which had as much in it of deep feeling as of good sense: it was not to be mistaken or argued with. "I am now ready, quite ready, to do my duty. What direction will you take, Claude, while I go towards the Tourmalet?"

"You are determined to go, then," said Claude, in a tone that he wished to have made interrogative, but which was that of positive

certainty, as to the fact he would have been glad to doubt.

“ Indeed, indeed, I am !” replied she: “ I have not so long persisted in performing my painful task to abandon it now, when it is most of all necessary, and most painful too, I must confess. My God! my God ! after weeks of expectation—after all the doctor's promises—after all our prayers, that he should now be lost to all hope ! It is indeed too bad. Poor unfortunate Caribert !” and here another flood of tears came to her relief; but they were interrupted by the approach of her father, who having arranged matters between the Spaniards and the Englishman, had come out to seek his child, and at the same time to get a confirmation of what he already suspected to be the cause of her absence, and her weeping, which he heard plainly within.

“ Well, well, my poor girl,” said he, putting his arm round her neck, “ it is even as I feared.

But we can't help it, Aline. We must submit to the misfortune. He has had a new fit! Is it not so, Claude?"

"Aye, worse than ever. I never saw him so outrageous. The last fortnight's quiet seems to have worked him up to a height of frenzy beyond all his former ones. It was quite frightful to see him dashing through the rocks above Lake Escoubous, as he bounded off towards the valley of Bastan, bare-headed and with naked feet, which were so lacerated as to leave a track of blood like a wounded izard."

"Oh Heavens!" cried Aline, "and I am not with him yet! Go, father, go and get me my hood. I cannot enter the house to be detained and questioned by Senor Manuel. You know his way, and it would be sure to be a quarrel between him and Claude. Make haste, my dear father, do make haste."

"Why now, my dear Aline," replied he, wishing to temporize, but evidently awed by her

decided, yet affectionate manner, "what would you do for him? You cannot reach the Pic before him; and you know he is in the hands of Providence, which will order every thing for the best."

"What!" exclaimed she, in a louder and more peremptory tone than I had yet heard from her—"Would you wish him then to perish? Would you run the risk of his dashing himself from the horrid precipice in his frantic despair? Would you risk that?" cried she, with increased energy, and grasping his arm.

"Why press me with such shocking questions, Aline? If Heaven choose to take him to itself, Heaven knows best."

"Oh father, father!" said she, in a deep reproachful tone, "you make my blood run cold,"—and so saying she moved towards the house with a hurried pace.

"Nay, nay, my daughter—don't leave me in anger. You know my heart bleeds for him—

but is not your happiness the whole world to me? Can a thousand lives weigh as heavy as that? Kiss me, Aline.—I'll get your hood for you."

She stepped quickly back and threw her arms round her father's neck, sobbing almost inarticulately, "I know all that, to be sure;—but consider, my father, how terrible it is to talk of his death, and such a death too as may await him if I do not make haste."

"Go then, in God's name, go! but the night is so dark—I never saw a thicker mist. You cannot get to the Pic till long after day light, and if he arrives there first, all may be over."

"Oh! I'll run down all the hills, and climb the steeps faster than ever I did. I trust, too, that he cannot have made much way, weak and lame as he is, poor thing! and in such hazy weather;—I shall be there first, please Heaven! My hood, father, my hood!"

I thought this was the moment for me to in-

terpose—not to prevent her departure, but to hasten her journey. There was something to me awfully sacred in the duty she was about to fulfil. I was deeply moved by her distress, and the air of mysterious interest of the whole adventure. I thrilled with horror at the imagined view of the frantic wanderer flinging himself from the precipice, which I was convinced from all I had heard, had some terrific connection with his insanity. I had stood, early that morning, by the edge of a chasm in the direction they spoke of, the most appalling I had ever beheld: one formed, as I thought, in a moment of Heaven's deadliest wrath against the world; looking as if the ireful stroke of a thousand concentrated thunderbolts had split the whole body of the mountain from its summit to its roots, and torn open, and scattered down to the vale the huge rocks that lay buried deepest in its heart. In my breathless curiosity to look over the chasm, I had lain down on my face, and crept cautiously along to its vast and broken

edge. With one hand twined in the roots of a thick tuft of rhododendron, and the other grasping a jagged piece of granite that stood out over the yawning depth, I cautiously gazed down into it. Shivered fragments of rock of immense magnitude, wrenched as it were from their hold in the earth, first caught my view. Some appeared in the very act of falling down, as they hung balanced in the ocean of the air by a slight isthmus of clay and stone, which seemed waiting the first storm-gust to sever it across. Other enormous masses toppled over the abyss, from projecting ledges of earth, not a hundredth part the size of the crags they supported. A few wild flowers and shrubs, dangling from the irregular sides, gave a horrid air of animation to the scene, and looked like living victims suspended over the chasm. One solitary pine-tree with broken branches and withered stem, hung out over the side. Its roots were bare, all but three or four fibres, by which it seemed to cling tremblingly to the cliff where it had been self-

652.

planted, as if conscious that the next shower of rain would wash away its scanty bed of earth, and precipitate it down below. The whole perpendicular face of this gulf was seared and shivered by the lightnings of countless ages, and innumerable storms. Not a living thing was in sight, but two or three eagles that floated through the sky far beneath me. The clouds rolled away thousands of feet below, and hid the tops of many a lesser hill—for I was then on one of the highest points of the Pyrenees. Every thing further down was lost to me, in the solid mist that seemed settled in the shelter of the ravine. I looked up and saw nothing but the thick haze of dawn, for the sun had not appeared over the furthest edge of the horizon. I had ascended the Pic du Midi to behold its glorious rising. I viewed, instead of it, this scene of harrowing desolation. I shrank back from the precipice, recovered my feet, and hurried off down the smooth eastern side of the mountain, in the direction of that valley, where night brought me

into contact with the adventure which led to this digression.

As Aline, her father, and Claude had been conversing, and creating in my mind the deepest sympathy for the unhappy maniac, the memory of my morning's position rushed strongly upon me. As the interest of their subject warmed, my horror seemed increased, and when she spoke of Caribert's dashing himself from the precipice, I could figure no other—none more horrible surely to my imagination. I spoke to her then as one fully impressed with the necessity of speed "Do, do go, my worthy girl—delay no longer—use no ceremony—take the strange gentleman's horse, and you may yet be in time to save him."

My suggestion was received by the father and Claude with warm approbation. Aline alone seemed to hesitate for a moment; but a word or two strongly urged from the rest of the party, and the repetition of my request decided her. We therefore, cautiously approached the shed

where the pony lay, and while the father entered the house to get Aline's hood, and see that all was right with the guests, Claude and I arrayed the little animal in his rude housings, and with some straw and the blanket which had served for my hosts covering during his short repose, we constructed a very tolerable pillion for Aline. The cautious messenger soon returned, bearing her scarlet woollen scarf and hood ; and by our joint assistance she was quickly mounted. Having hastily settled that, while she pursued her route directly towards the Tourmalet, to reach the Pic du Midi by the shortest bridle path, Claude was to hasten by the direct way across the mountain to Lake Escoubous, and endeavour to fall in with the maniac, and keep him in observation: the interesting girl bade us adieu and set out on her expedition.

CHAPTER III.

Although Aline was almost immediately out of sight, we were none of us inclined to quit the spot in which she had left such a blank. We stopped, as if by concerted plan, each in his place, and listened to the sound of the little pony's feet, as he cautiously picked his steps over the rough flints which formed the road leading from the house towards my young friend the goat-herd's hovel. His rider, however, soon quitted this tedious path, for we quickly distinguished the echo of his cantering pace, as she pressed him forwards on the smooth turf which bordered the road on either side. The sounds soon died away, overpowered by the boisterous laugh which came occasionally from the house; and when there was no chance of hearing

more of our heroine, her father and myself seemed mutually inclined to speak. I was the first to break the silence. "That daughter, my friend," said I, "is indeed a treasure."

"A treasure!" exclaimed he, "she is a wonderful creature, Sir; take my word for it you don't know a thousandth part of her worth, or of her value to me ever since I lost her mother ten years ago: and more the pity that she should be ruined in health and happiness by an unlucky madman." "But," said I, "all may be well with him yet. He may recover his reason."

"God forbid," replied he, quickly. "That would be the worst that could happen."

"How is that?" asked I. "If well over his delirium, she might be married and happy enough after all."

"Married! and to Caribert—Ah! Sir, you don't know how matters stand between them. You don't know her story. If you knew that, you would not wonder that I wish him in heaven; unfortunate devil that he is. Until he dies, I

tell you, Sir, there's no chance of any thing but misery for either my daughter or this fine lad here, and I might say for myself too."

My eyes turned towards Claude, whom I had not till this moment had either light or leisure to remark particularly. He leant upon his staff, with a fixed and absent stare, quite abstracted from us and our conversation, and evidently listening, or fancying he listened still, to the distant (and to us inaudible) sounds of Aline's pony. I am sure he was deceiving himself, but the minds of lovers have ears as well as eyes, and it is hard for common observers to measure the space they can see and hear over. It had not before occurred to me, that Claude was actually Aline's lover. I had never asked, or reflected whether or not he was her cousin, or her friend, or some kind messenger. In his bearing towards her there was nothing beyond affectionate and considerate attention. He had none of that involuntary impetuosity in his assiduities—that marked and self-pronouncing privi-

lege to give consolation and advice—that evident conviction of his right to be near her—that natural tone of an influence over her, which in my notions of a lover's feelings, are blended with all their tenderness, quite in spite of one. Upon reconsidering his whole manner while she was present, and comparing it with his vacant stare on the spot she had so lately occupied, and with the expression of his handsome, intelligent and mild countenance, I was quite satisfied that he *was* her lover, notwithstanding what appeared the almost insuperable obstacles that lay in the way of his passion. He appeared to be about four and twenty years of age, formed for activity rather than fatigue; and as he leaned silently upon his staff in the mild light which the candle sent through the window, he gave me the idea of a kind-hearted, gentle lowland youth, rather than that which we involuntarily attach to the figure of an enterprising mountaineer. It was the singularity of such a figure in these rough regions, and its contrast with the rugged outlines which

marked those of my host and the smugglers, and almost all indeed whom I met in this part of the Pyrenees, that pleased me so much. I all at once took a great interest in his affairs: and here avow myself one of those impertinent persons who cannot help doing so, whenever I am much struck by the manners of men—and (since I am in the confessing vein) by the mien of the other sex.

"Look at him, Sir, how he stands there thinking," whispered my host, twitching me by the elbow. "That has been his way for more than two years. Never the least flinching from his constancy in all the rebuffs she has given him;—and almost ever since that fellow Caribert went mad, five months back, this fine lad has followed and watched him as he would a stray goat, all out of love to her; and no hope, as I said before, while *he* lives—nor after, perhaps."

"She preferred poor Caribert, then?" said I, removing, with him, a few paces further from Claude.

"She did so, but heaven only can tell why; for compared to this Claude he was as harsh and rugged as the rock his father was dashed over."

"What did you say?" exclaimed I with a shudder, for I only caught imperfectly the latter part of his reply, which seemed closed by a muttered curse. "Was his father dashed over a precipice?"

"Ah! I forgot that you didn't know the story. I'll tell you what, Sir—wait just awhile till the Spaniards are gone, and the foreigner in bed again, and Claude set out across the mountain, and I'll tell you the whole history of this wretched Caribert, Claude, and my poor daughter. Wait a little, while I go into the house, and set all to rights. Come Claude, my lad, what are you thinking of? Come in with me, and take some supper before you start. You have a long walk before you, and you must be tired I am sure. Rouse up, my lad!' He accompanied these words by a slap on Claude's shoulder, and a hearty shake of the hand.

Claude answered, that he was a little fatigued, but was in no heart for supping. "I'll just borrow your gun, Monsieur Moinard," added he. "I shall be off across Mount Arbizon, and I may fall in with some izards, or perhaps meet the hunters on my path."

"Aye, you shall have the gun with pleasure, for you know how to use it well, and to take care of it too. Come in and we'll get it, and furnish your flask and your sack with some provisions at any rate, if you can't eat now; come in!"

During this dialogue, I had made up my mind as to my course. Much as I wished for the disclosures promised me by my host, I was resolved not to purchase them by the loss of Claude's company. I had determined to be his companion across the hill; I had hopes of learning from him a great deal of what Moinard had promised to reveal; and above all things I was anxious to fall in again with Aline, whom there was a chance of my seeing, as well as the unfortunate object of her search. I was

therefore all impatience to arrange my project with Claude, and to get quietly off from the cottage without any interruption from the group within, whose differences appeared (by their blended voices in the chorus of a drinking song,) to have subsided into a tone of very turbulent harmony.

Notwithstanding all this desire to get deeper into the adventure, I confess I felt an itching to have a parting peep at the British Quixote, and the Spanish heroes, against whom I left him so inclined to run a tilt. I stepped therefore towards the door, and placing myself out of the range of the light shot forth from the candle, I took an observation, myself quite unobserved. The three melodists were seated round the table, which was garnished with brown bread, goat's-milk cheese, a plate of raw onions, the remnant of some dried sausages, a pitcher of water, and a bottle, which I supposed to contain brandy. On these materials the Spaniards had been regaling in preparation for their departure, and

while they were now washing down their supper, they each accompanied their draught by the fumes of a cigar. My countryman was similarly furnished; and the whole group presented an appearance of droll associations. One of the smugglers, a huge broad-shouldered fellow, with black bushy hair and whiskers, and his large mantle wrapped round him, had placed the Dandy's white cockle-shell hat on his head, and in his efforts to keep it balanced while he moved in time to his music, was forced to make several grotesque gesticulations, which threw the laughing dandy into attitudes of corresponding oddity. He, on his part, wore the Spaniard's immense hat, which completely fell over his face, of which the only part observable to me was the mouth, embellished by his cigar, and opening alternately for the ejection of the smoke or the admission of the grog. He sat without his coat, but he had got little Mannette's red hood thrown scarfwise over his shoulders. His gigantic shadow kept playing along the

floor most ludicrously with his motions; while the enlarged profile of the second Spaniard, with his handkerchief still tied round his head, grinned grimly on the wall close to which he sat. Mannette seemed in ecstacy with the scene. She sometimes jumped about the room, dancing to the discord, and snapping her fingers in imitation of castanets. Again she popped down on the side of the bed, mimicking the attitude of the dandy, or held her sides in fits of laughter. Claude stood in a corner inattentive to and unnoticed by the singers, examining the gun given him by the host, who was bustling about the room making preparations for the departure of his various visitors. I could have wished to catch more distinctly the words of the song. I recognized it for one of those patriotic effusions composed during the late war, which I had heard some months before on another part of the Spanish frontier. It began thus:—

Españoles, la patrie oprimida
Os convoca en los campos de honor,
Acudid á su voz imperiosa,
Recobrad nestro antiguo valor.

I forget the remainder except the concluding stanza, which was impressed on my memory by the reiterated vociferations of the Englishman, who, pleased with the final sound, demanded and obtained full half a dozen repetitions of the couplet.

En defensa de causa tan justa,
Toma parte el Britano valor;
Tema el mundo tan fuertes naciones
Tiembla de ellas el tirano feroz!
Estrechados en firme alianza
Mueve á entrambos ignal interes
Y qual Dios tutelar venerado
Sera siempre de España el Ingles.*.

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* At the request of the Englishman, in our after acquaintance, I gave him the following loose notion of these fragments, in his own language.

Spaniards, our enemy tramples the land—
We are called by our country to freedom and fame—

To the fine martial air of the song and the sonorous voices of the Spaniards, the delighted and indefatigable dandy joined in loud shouts of "tol de rol lol," "fal de ral lal," "heigh derry down," and every other variety of English chorus, hunting or drinking, thumping on the table, and stamping with all the energy of public spirit. I confess I was much pleased with my odd-looking compatriot. I saw he was a fellow who could feel as well as fight; and I had much ado to resist my inclination of going to grasp him by the hand, and make common

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Let us fly and obey her loud voice of command,
And react all the glories combined with her name!

* * * *

In defence of a quarrel so righteous as ours,
The valour of Britain is joined with our own;
While the world praises loudly the fame of those powers
Which make Despots sit quivering with fear on each
throne.
Interlaced in firm union, no rival between,
Our cause and our interests no tyrant shall sever:
What to Spain all her tutelar Gods may have been,
Is the Englishman now,—Aye, and shall be for ever!

cause in the "firme alianza" of the parties. But a little reflection decided me against this movement. I thought that if I announced myself as an Englishman, I might find his companionship a very troublesome encumbrance, and from the same reason, I did not want to encounter a friendly association with the Spaniards. I saw that Claude was very nearly taking the first step towards his journey, and as no time was to be lost, I determined to enter the house, to gather together Ranger and my other marching accoutrements. I must here say, by way of parenthesis, that I never found any difficulty in passing myself for a Frenchman in this border country, where the natives were insensible to whatever was foreign in my accent, and where, to make myself understood, I was obliged to mix French and Spanish with a large portion of *patois*. I walked in, therefore, and saluted the company with a counterfeit Parisian air, which passed for genuine. The three friends looked significantly at each other, and repeated

once more the last line of the song, the Englishman groaning forth like a hoarse echo, the concluding words "España el Ingles," with a voice that kept the promise of all that was unmusical in his countenance. He seemed anxious to attract my attention: looked quite disposed to take a great national quarrel upon his own narrow shoulders, and thought, as he confessed to me afterwards, that I was a cursed snivelling fellow, for not taking notice of his pointed manner. It did not, however, pass unobserved by me: I noted it down and was highly amused, and not in the least displeased with it. But my business was with Claude, to whom I briefly expressed my intention of joining in his expedition. He readily assented, and our host declared that since I was resolved to go, he would cross to the western side of Mount Arbizon along with us, as he had a flock thereabouts which he had not looked after for some days, and whose shepherd, he feared, might take to following the bear hunters if they passed that way.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SA...

Matters being thus arranged, it was very desirable to get rid of the Spaniards as quickly as possible. Moinard therefore addressed them in their own language, to the following effect.

"Gentlemen, I know well that he's but a bad fellow that parts good company, but pleasures should always give the wall to business. You know what I mean, Senor Manuel. The mules are refreshed, the supper ended, the cock crowing. What time do you think of setting out?"

"By the life of my Saint, Moinard, you are the trustiest of smugglers? Twenty long years that we've worked together, I never knew lass or glass to keep you from trade when aught was to be made of it. So much the better for your daughters, my friend, and the hearty lads who are to have them and their fortunes. Apropos of your girls, what has become of my favourite Aline. I caught a glimpse of her to-night with young Claude here, so I suppose she does not scorn him so much as she did, and that she has

left mad Caribert to go hunting as usual with his father's ghost. Is it so?"

Moinard, while he replied, cast an anxious look at Claude, whose cheeks showed symptoms of rising anger. "Why, Manuel, there's no use in touching a string like that. Claude can pick up a little of what you say, and however he may bear scorn from Aline, he won't from another, you know."

"As for that matter," said Manuel, "I should be sorry to hurt the lad's feelings, and I did not know he understood any Spanish." So saying he rose from his seat, and stretched out his hand to Claude, addressing him in bad French, "Come, Claude, my boy, take the hand of a hearty well-wisher of yours." Claude smiled good naturedly, and shook the proffered hand. "That's a fine honest fellow," continued the Spaniard, "I wish you success with all my heart. I've but one piece of advice to give you. If Aline continues cruel, and takes again to this maniac, come across the mountains one

fine day to Puertolas, and I'll introduce you to my little black eyed niece, Antonia, who dances the Bolero as well as any lass in Arragon, and will repay your affection in smiles instead of frowns, I'll warrant her. The mark of a ripe mulberry is washed out by a green one, you know, as we say in Spain."*

"Thank you, Senor," replied Claude. "When I have no hope left here, perhaps I'll pay you a visit on the banks of the Cinca;—but not till then I candidly tell you."

"Very well, my lad; come when you like, you are sure of a welcome. I never say one thing and mean another, depend upon it.

* Dicen que ya no me quieres
No me da para maldita,
Que *la mancha de la mora*
Con otra verde se quita.

These words have passed into a common proverb in Spain. Senor Manuel's conversation was thickly interlarded with those favourite expletives of his countrymen. I recorded only this one, and have somewhat curtailed his speeches in other respects.

Now, Santiago," turning to his comrade, "let's reload the mules. The sun must not catch us this side the depôt. Adieu, my brave Englishman! Let's exchange hats once more if you please, in token of love." The dandy guessed at the speech, by the gestures of the speaker, stood up, as erect, as thin, and nearly as tall as a young pine tree, put the Spaniard's hat on its proper block, ran his scraggy fingers through his own curled locks, which he had disembarrassed of their papillotes, and took a sly self-satisfied peep at a little looking-glass, hanging over the fire-place.

We were all now in motion. The Spaniards went towards the shed, followed by Moinard and the dandy. Mannette carried out a cloak, and one of the packages belonging to the former, and Claude and I stepped on one side to see the departure. No sooner had the party reached the shed than I observed the dandy looking about very inquisitively for his pony. The

Spaniards went on with their girthing, strapping and bridling, and Moinard either did not see, or would not notice his searching glances. At length the mules being safely loaded, and the smugglers in the very act of starting, the dandy thought it full time to utter his enquiries and complaints concerning the disappearance of his little nag. He addressed himself to the Spaniards in the best French he could muster, and from his tone I could ascertain clearly, he had a lurking notion that they were concerned in the evasion. "Blood and fury!" exclaimed Manuel, "what does he think, Moinard? Does he suspect us of having packed up his pony in our bales of tobacco?"

"Never mind, never mind," said Moinard, still speaking Spanish, "I'll quiet him. Leave him to me." Then addressing himself to the Englishman in French, "Your horse is safe, Sir, quite safe, I'll warrant you."

"Where the devil is he then?" angrily asked

the dandy, "I am determined to have him; and no man stirs from this place, till I am sure of his safety."

With these words he deliberately threw his two long arms out right and left, and with his back towards me, looking altogether like some huge finger-post, he firmly seized the bridles of the two mules, ordering their leaders to stop, in a tone of pure aristocratical command.

"Death and fire!' cried Manuel, (for the other Spaniard had not in my hearing spoken a word the whole night)—"I never saw such a phlegmatic fellow. Death and fire! what's all this?" and I observed him instantly draw a knife. His companion did the same. I hurried forwards, alarmed for the safety of my countryman, who seemed quite indifferent to the danger, shook his head only, and swore in plain English, (evidently quite for his own satisfaction) that "he'd be d——d if they stirred one inch till he got back his pony."

Moinard, with his usual steady presence of

mind, laid his hand on the dandy's arm, and said to him in a firm voice, "Recollect, Sir, you must not offend these gentlemen. But to make you easy about your horse, you may be sure that no one has it but my daughter Aline, who has taken a loan of it (since the truth must out) to ride across the hill on a visit to a sick lover."

The last word seemed to stick in the speaker's throat, but it quite softened the heart of him to whom it was addressed. "Her lover!" cried he, loosening his hold of the bridles—"God bless the girl, I would have carried her on my own back had not the pony been at hand. She's heartily welcome to it—heartily welcome I assure you—and I beg you will make a thousand apologies to my worthy allies here for my rudeness. But I don't stand trifling you see."

Moinard performed the task of conciliation full as well as that of explanation; the Spaniards expressed themselves satisfied; and after a few parting shakes of the hand with the dandy and the host, and a kiss each from Mannette, they

quickly wound up the hill and were lost to us immediately. Moinard had next to deal with the dandy. He very soon persuaded him to go to bed and recover the broken thread of his repose: with assurances that Aline would be back soon after day-light, to return his pony and prepare his breakfast. His off-hand air of sincerity quite composed the generous and gentle dandy, who without more ado marched, to my great satisfaction, straight forward into his closet.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASVATI MAHAL. *

CHAPTER IV.

As nearly half an hour had elapsed since the departure of Aline, we lost no further time, but stepped forward with a quick pace. Moinard merely gave a few hints to Mannette for the regulation of small household matters during his absence, and then put his cap on his head, took a staff in his hand, and led the way up towards the mountain side. Claude and I followed close upon his heels, and Ranger on ours. The whole party was fresh and unincumbered, as I had left my knapsack behind, having settled that I was to return to the cottage, whatever might be the result of our adventure.

It was then the month of August; no mat-

ter in what year, the night had been misty, which I knew was rather a reason to look for a bright morning. The smooth even path as we went along, and the deep conversation into which we entered, beguiled our route; so that I was somewhat surprised on casting my looks towards the east, as we issued from a ravine about half way up the mountain's side, to find that the dawn was beginning to break. I stopped for a moment to take breath, for the ascent had been very rapid. I gazed around me, and was pleased to see the mists rising gradually upwards, and leaving the bottom of the valleys clear. I distinguished the little river which had narrowed as we mounted towards its source, and the still smaller streamlets that trickled down towards it, like skeins of silvery tissue hanging on the heathy mantle which covered the mountain. A fresh breeze came from the eastward heralding the rising sun, and I marked appearing above the horizon those prelusive beams which he sends out, as avant-couriers, to clear his path

along the ways of heaven. Remembering my disappointment of the preceding morning, on the top of the Pic du Midi, I was resolved to be in time at the summit of Arbizon, to see the first burst of the day-god as he shewed his splendent face to my portion of the world. I gave therefore the hint to my guides, and we pushed quickly on. My companions, though more accustomed to the scene than I was, seemed to participate in my anxiety. We all abandoned for awhile the subject which had lately given such interest to our conversation; and paid, in silence, our homage to the sovereign whose levee we were hurrying to attend. The vapours kept pace with us at first; they mounted beside us for awhile, but soon outstripped our progress; and as they left all clear before us, we saw them blending gradually with the clouds, which had already taken their high stations close to the mountain's summit. As the light increased, a gradual tone and appearance of security seemed to accompany it on the earth. The howling of

the wolves, and the barking of the shepherds' dogs, which had kept concert during the night, now gave place to the hum of insects. The eagles, sure of their way, came two or three of them floating down through the air, and seemed to pierce with keen gaze the deepest recesses of the vale. The wild flowers opened their bosoms and freely shared their fragrant scents with the breeze, that kissed them as it passed upwards. All nature began to robe itself for the coming ceremony. The grey clouds assumed a variety of tinges of many brilliant colours. The peaks rising here and there above them shone in roseate hues; and the snow-heaps that lay on their granite beds were covered with a deep blush of blended crimson and purple. I hurried breathlessly forward, for I feared I should be late. I found that nature was too quick for me. I saw the horizon covered with the yellow streaks, on whose steps the sun treads so quickly. His dazzling beams were fast piercing up the skies, and the west of Heaven was glowing in all the

splendid mixture of bright colours which it catches from reflection. I hastened on still faster. I had taken the lead of my companions. I did not look at all before me, until enveloped by thick mists, and losing all sight of the beautiful panorama around me, I found that we were actually in the clouds.

A pang of disappointment was my first sensation, but I did not pause in my career. I heard Claude and Moinard calling to me that I was mounting too high from the path, but I replied that I would soon rejoin them. They paused, and I rushed on. I hoped still to find an opening through the vapours to catch a glimpse of the world below me, blazing in all the splendour of the fully risen luminary. The mists told me that my hopes were vain, and that the moment was past, for they were all at once illumined with a sudden rush of brightness, that gave to every particle of which they were composed a silver brilliancy, and seemed to throw a glow of warmth into the atmosphere. A few

minutes more led me to the confines of this bright veil. The pointed peaks of the mountain began to appear—then the blue heaven above—and in another step or two, I had passed the outward edge of the mist. I looked round, and felt a thrill of awe shoot through me, as I gazed on the solemnity of the scene. As far as the eye could penetrate the apparently boundless extent, a wide ocean of thick clouds alone was visible below me, and the spotless vault of heaven above. Not the slightest sign of earth, or of man, was within view. The heavy mass of congregated vapours, in their millions of involuted folds, brought at once to my mind the notion of the universal deluge, when the world of waters swept majestically along, crushing and burying all trace of animal and vegetable existence. I imagined the last of living victims flying from the coming flood, and hurrying his tottering steps to the summit of the highest hill. I retreated involuntarily upwards—and could have fled in the midst of my

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SA...

abstraction, had not the out-bursting of the glorious sun given a new and splendid character to this most wonderful scene. He rushed up rapidly from the mass of clouds into the clear blue heaven. He flung no beams round him. Nothing existed as a ground-work to throw them out into shadow, or mark their palpable touch. He was a ball of single and intolerable splendour. My gaze was instantaneous, and had nearly blinded me. I covered my eyes for a moment, and when I looked again the whole ocean of clouds was as a multitude of wreaths of snow, enwrapped one over the other in folds of dazzling whiteness. The scene was too splendid and too sublime for my continued gaze. I turned in search of relief, and caught, to the southward, the wide extended chain of mountains spreading to the right and left, and lost in the imperfect light of their far distant limits.

Barren and desolate as they looked, there was still something in them which spoke of a nature

that was not strange to me. They were palpable realities that recalled me to the world, and brought home to me associations of humanity. I looked on them in all their venerable magnitude of form and extent, enthroned on earth, and covered with the glow of heaven. In all my reverence for their mightiness, I was never so impressed with it as now. I felt them, with their corresponding chains in various parts of the world, superior to all the united wonders of nature; and ran over, in the half hour that I stopped to gaze on them, in this new aspect, the thoughts which at a calmer moment I threw into the following form.—

Ye vast, immeasurable mounds!
What are your limits, where your bounds?
Oh! when has labouring nature shewn
Wonders as mighty as your own?
Which of her works is the compeer
Of such huge heaps as gather here?
Alps, Andes, Apennines, proud names,
What o'er your might precedence claims?

Does ocean boast its broad expanse?—
And can the eye within its glance
Grasp your stupendous magnitude!
Its waves with thousand tints imbued?—
And dares the colouring of the sea
With your wild shades seek rivalry!
The dreary grandeur that must brave
The watchful wanderer of the wave?—
Oh! how insipid to his eyes
Who feeds on your varieties,
Her pigmy undulations rise!
What splendours do her caverns hold
Which are not in your caves enrolled?
What is her widely vaunted store
To him who would her wilds explore?
'Tis calm and tempest, wave and sky,
Sublime but sad monotony.
But in *your* realms what richness dwells!
Pierce Surancolin's crystal cells—
Explore each pass—range every vale—
What magic sweets perfume the gale!
What colours o'er the hills are shed—
The varied shades the pine-woods throw
Upon the rich cascades below—
Peaks deep empurpled—vales bespread

With rhododendron's crimson flowers,
And irises so brightly blue!
'Twould seem as if Heaven sometimes showers
A rain of its own azure hue,
Whose moisture clothes the plants of earth
With brilliancy of purer birth.

The turbulent ocean leaps and lives
In pride of its prerogatives.
Vain pride! as if to it were given
The power alone to rise tow'rds Heaven.
When the Creator's loud command
Bade the wave sep'rate from the land,
To *that* alone was willed the pride
Of motion—and to *his* denied?
Are not the mighty mountains rife
With germs of undeveloped life,
Embryo combustions which but lie
The slumbering lights of destiny?
Is ancient Idee's fate forgot?—
Or buried Pleur's more recent lot,
When Conto's loosened fragments fell,
Nor spared a voice the shock to tell,
But heaped on high its earthy wave
O'er the crush'd thousands of one grave?

Go, gaze from Ocean's bounding bed
On angry Etna's flame-wrapped head;
Mark while you shrink with shuddering thrill,
The thick stream course the desolate hill;
See the devoted hamlets fall,
As the live lava saps the wall,
Which yon proud city dared to raise
A bulwark 'gainst the floating blaze.
View the pale habitants who sweep
Like spectres down the glaring steep.
In vain, in vain—they may not reach
The frail protection of the beach,
For see, the frighted waves recoil,
And shudd'ring shun the blasted soil;
And on the mountain's gaping side
Another crater opens wide.—
Thicker the volumed smoke ascends—
More fierce the hot stream downwards bends—
In blackened gusts the ashes fly,
And hide the blaze that lit the sky.
Darkness is on the world!—Again
By flames rebursting on the ken
The gloom is broke. Ye powers on high
Is the sad scene reality?
The hill is heaving from its base—

The tottering mountains change their place—
The valleys sink—rocks rise around—
New rivers bursting flood the ground;
Where are the beauteous hamlets gone?
Where hundreds stood there is not one.
Say, what has hushed the shrieking crowd?
No voice breaks from the horrid shroud
That wraps in gloom the city's site—
Oh agony! Oh direful light
That shews the truth! Yon hideous blank
Yawns where engulphed Catania sank!—
—Is not this motion? Do the waves
Of that soft sea which lightly laves,
Or whose worst ire but smooths the sand,
Bound like these billows of the land?

Yours be the glory then, ye hills,
High as your own huge pinnacles,
To reign supreme, creation's crest,
Magnific monuments of rest!
But should your heaven communing spires
Shake their proud heads—and slumbering fires
Up from your opening wombs be hurled
To wrap the self-consuming world,
Ocean shall then roll pale with dread,
And sink beneath her scorching bed!

While I stood on the topmost pinnacle of the mountain, forgetful of all below me, I heard a shot fired, and prepared to descend; and just as I was about to plunge into the mist, I observed Claude's head appearing through it. He and Moinard, utterly unable to comprehend my proceedings, had begun to be alarmed for my safety or my senses, and I soon understood that their previous speed, which I supposed to arise from sympathy with my sensations, was wholly caused by that connected with poor Aline. The sound of this name, and Claude's tone in pronouncing it, acted like a spell upon my feelings, and I was not free from self-reproach for having abandoned for vague and shadowy abstractions, the more rational subject of human interests and passions. To make amends for my desertion, I redoubled my speed on joining Moinard, who had begun to trudge downwards, trusting to the younger limbs of Claude and myself for his being quickly overtaken. We had still a long walk before us ere we could

commence the ascent of the Pic du Midi, the point of rendezvous with Aline. We soon entered deeply again into the heart of our subject. My companions opened their minds as freely as they moved their tongues, and I will take this opportunity of detailing to my readers the whole substance of their disclosures, as well as that of some after conversations with Caribert's mother, Aline, and others of the actors in the story. It is impossible to separate the discourse of one from that of the others, and for the sake of their respective reputations, I shall throw the whole into a narrative form, taking upon myself the responsibility of its veracity and arrangement.

CHAPTER V.

In the whole range of the Pyrenees, from the ocean to the Mediterranean, from Mount Aralar to Mount Carrigon, there were not two finer young fellows in their different natures than Caribert and Claude. They were both born in the district of Barrège. They were the admiration of the neighbourhood in infancy, its hope in boyhood, and its pride in youth. When as children they sported about the cottages of their respective parents, or later began to clamber up the mountains in search of young eagles, or in pursuit of a wounded izard, the fathers used to shake their heads and rub their hands together, and the mothers to smile and look up thankfully to heaven,—all four agreeing that there were

no lads like them to be seen any where. This was a questionable sort of testimony, no doubt, but it was borne out by the general opinion; and when a few years brought the persons and characters of the two friends into full developement, the parental prophecies were amply realized.

Caribert and Claude were sworn friends. They had rendered each other a thousand reciprocal services, and were united by ties of gratitude, unrelaxed by humiliating feelings of benefits received without equivalent. Their pursuits were in most instances as much alike as their meaus of attaining them were distinct. They both loved with all their heart, and followed with all their strength, the exercises suitable to their age. But while Caribert delighted in winning from every competitor the prize of feats of power, Claude's ambition was to carry off the palm in trials of agility and skill. He was the fastest runner and the best leaper between the Gave and the Neste. No one pitched

the stone or wrestled so well as Caribert. They both triumphed, and neither felt any jealousy of his friend.

They were hunters by profession, as their fathers had been before them. They were passionately fond of the sport, but they followed it in a different spirit. Claude, with his rifle flung across his shoulder, rarely allowed the rising sun to surprise him in his bed, for at the earliest dawn he was generally far up the mountain, following the track of the herds of izards, or cautiously singling out some straggling victim of his almost unerring aim. Caribert was quite as eager in the pursuit of his game, but it was of another kind. He scorned the chase of the timid izard, left almost entirely to his father the care of providing the number necessary for the food of the family, and scarcely condescended to pursue the wolves that fled from his shout in the summer season. In winter, when hunger gave them courage, he would sometimes meet their attack; but the objects of his prowess were in all seasons,

at all times of the day or night, the fierce and powerful bears which abounded in his neighbourhood. For them he was always ready, with his two favourite dogs at his heels, his strong gaiters, his leathern doublet, his large clasp-knife, and his trusty pike. Thus equipped he used to accompany his old and hardy father, who inspired him on in boyhood by details of his former feats, and who was happy to see the deeds of his own youth often surpassed by those of his son and the successor to his celebrity.

But the subject on which Claude and Caribert shewed at once the greatest sympathy and widest difference—was love. They had both nearly at the same period felt the first symptoms of attachment to the self-same object. I need not name her, or if I must, to avoid obscurity, to Aline. Claude had first known, and consequently first loved her. He was her near neighbour, and his sisters were her friends. He had scarcely reached manhood when he lost both his parents, and was left the sole protector of three

sisters, one older and the others younger than himself. This constant association with females added to the natural tenderness of his character, while the care of a family increased its prudence. A growing passion for such a girl as Aline had alone been wanting to make him one of the steadiest, as he had been before one of the kindest lads in the world.

Caribert seldom or never came down towards the low country. There was nothing he disliked so much as the level ground; and he was not fond of female society. He had neither sisters nor brothers. He loved his mother well enough, but he doted on his father. The roughness of the old man's character, his desperate and reckless courage, and contempt of all the softer pursuits of life, deeply influenced the congenial mind of Caribert; so much so, that he often reproached his friend Claude with what he called his effeminacy, and resisted for some time his pressing request to submit to an introduction to Aline. After much soliciting, how-

ever, he consented, and came across the hill on a fine evening, when the fête day of one of Claude's sisters was celebrating at his cottage.

A joyous party of the neighbours was assembled, and the dance was proceeding merrily on the grass-plat in front of the cottage, when Caribert made his appearance. Every eye was quickly turned towards him; many a joke, and welcome, and expression of surprise were lavished upon his presence at such a scene. He replied to all with a joyous air, but his whole attention was soon attracted towards one of the dancers, whose manner and appearance struck him as something quite superior to those of many of her prettier companions. Claude saw this with delight, and it was not unobserved, or unrelished by Aline herself, for it was on her that Caribert's eyes were so firmly fixed. She had previously heard a great deal of this redoubtable hunter, and had once had a glimpse of him, as he pursued with one of his compan-

ions, a more than commonly ferocious wolf that had ravaged the whole district, for many days, and had finally met its death from his well-nerved arm. Her imagination had been full of the hero, for he was such in his narrow sphere of action, but she had always pictured him as she had seen him in his coarse hunter's costume, his pike in his hand, and his face and person animated with rage. She could scarcely believe it to be the same person who was now pointed out to her, smartly dressed in a Spanish doublet and hose, a blue sash round his waist, and a bunch of rhododendron blooming gaily in his hat, in honor of his friend's sister, and to fit him for a place at her fête.

Aline listened and sought in vain for a surly tone of voice or a savage look. She heard and saw only lively and gracious words freely given to his acquaintance, and a gaze of admiration and something very like tenderness turned towards her. She possessed as little vanity as almost any of her sex, but she was very highly

pleased notwithstanding; and I who have seen her, can well imagine what an animated and graceful expression threw itself insensibly into her looks and attitudes.

When the dance was ended, and its temporary partnerships dissolved, Claude was stepping forward to introduce Caribert to Aline, but he was anticipated in his intention by the quicker movement of the former, who was resolved to do himself that kind office—for he hated ceremony. He accordingly moved towards her, and in his best manner requested she would dance next with him. She consented readily, nay, with pleasure; and that point settled, Caribert turned carelessly round to his friend. Claude was quite gratified at what was passing. He was only astonished how any one could at first sight go so boldly up to one whom *he* durst scarcely approach after months of intimacy, and he could not help saying to himself, "Ah! if he loved her but ever so little, how he would shrink back when he most wished to be near her."

The mind of Caribert was not of that stamp. It was ardent and impetuous. It followed its object ever at full speed, and knew none of those tardy and hesitating movements which distinguished that of Claude. This meeting with Aline was an era in his life, and his whole bearing bore instant evidence of the importance of the event. When the dance recommenced, he led his partner forth with a feeling of confidence and triumph. His whole frame was animated, and his look and manner in unison. He danced and talked with a vivacity which astonished Aline the more, as his energy had nothing whatever of violence in it. In one of the pauses, she expressed her surprise that so proverbial a despiser of the amusement should appear to enjoy the dance as he did.

"Why," said he, "I don't forget what I learnt and loved when a child; and never since then have I felt as I do this evening. My nature seems quite changed—turned back into those times of happiness."

The look which accompanied this speech made Aline blush to the eyes, and caused her heart to flutter. "Oh! I meant," replied she, "that I did not expect to find a bear hunter so good a dancer, that's all." "Why so?" returned he; "even the bears under this rough hand of mine could learn to dance; and surely I should be worse than the brutes if I could not do as much, when guided by yours."

He here took her hand in his; and though I by no means imply that Aline's could bear any comparison with those delicate members of the many fair readers who will yet, I trust, turn over this page, I have no doubt whatever but that it acknowledged the pressure of the ardent Caribert's, just in the proper proportion of mountain sentiment, acting upon manual feeling

It is not necessary that I should record any further specimens of the conversation of the— lovers, for so I must plainly call them. They were so to all intents, aye, and purposes. The labours of united years could not unravel the

web that entwined itself round their hearts in the course of that short evening. Caribert felt as if born anew. He seemed to have found in one moment of mere chance what had been wanting to him all his life, and a sudden conviction appeared to tell him that his whole life was from that moment engaged and devoted to her.

She on her part could scarcely fathom the depth of her feelings, they were so totally new, so mixed, and so astonishing. She did not know what to make of either Caribert or herself. He was so very, very unlike what she expected; and she so utterly changed from what she had been. She had never cared much for dancing beyond the pleasure of seeing her friends—now she felt as if she could go on trippingly for ever, and was quite disappointed and unhappy when the music ceased. She was no great talker in general, and used to listen with but little interest to the common topics of her rustic friends; yet she now seemed to have acquired the faculty and the desire of perpetual speech, and she devoured

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every word uttered by Caribert, although on summing up what he said, she actually found it to relate to nothing more than the commonest matter connected with their respective ways of life. She thought all this very wonderful, and so it was, in fact,—wonderful, although of every day occurrence ; and defying solution, although there are few of my readers, I am sure (at least I hope so for their sakes), who have not once in their lives had experience of it all.

When the gaieties of the evening were fairly over, and the stars just beginning to open *their* dance in the heavens, the party broke up, and the guests took each their separate ways, up hill and down dale, towards their homely beds. I like to picture to my imagination the different groups as they moved across the mountains, the youths in their graceful costumes, the girls half covered by the scarlet hoods, called capulets, universally worn in those parts, and amazingly picturesque at a little distance, when contrasted with the bright green colours of the mountain,

or the rich hue of the flowers scattered in broad patches on the grass. Both Claude and Caribert formed Aline's escort to her home. They had a league to walk, and it was very quickly completed. There was a great deal of conversation on the way, but it was entirely between Caribert and Aline. They both talked fluently, and thus seemed almost to forget the presence of Claude, who had no wish to take part in the discourse, being quite satisfied to feel Aline's arm on his, and quite happy to see a new proof of her power, as exemplified in Caribert's loquacity.

Old Moinard and little Mannette met them at the door. The former welcomed Claude warmly, and received his friend rather ceremoniously. He had a penetrating eye and a calculating head, and as my readers may recollect from the hints of Senor Manuel, was a man of a worldly and money-making turn. He saw with one glance that Caribert might become the rival of Claude. He had heard a great deal of him, and knew him a little, and putting together

what folks said, and what he saw, he was quite convinced that such a one would stand a thousand chances to one, in a contest with Claude, for the affections of a girl of Aline's disposition. He disliked, moreover, the character of Caribert's father, particularly that portion of his reputation which stamped him as a very poor man, who had ever enough to do to make both ends meet through life, and who never knew any thing of comfort, unless eating venison three or four times a week from necessity, not choice, might be reckoned as such. Claude, on the other hand, was the proprietor, jointly with his sisters, of a very nice spot of ground, and a comfortable cottage, and likely from his steady habits to do well in the world. He had Moinard's best wishes in his suit to Aline, and it was therefore that Caribert failed to share in the warm reception he now met with.

Aline saw, or thought she saw, into her father's thoughts. She felt as if she had done something wrong, she could not tell why or

wherefore, and did not venture to invite Caribert into the house. Moinard was determined to cut the visit short, before he got across the threshold.

"Thank ye, my lads, both, for the care of my girl. You have a smart walk home, and the night looks rather gloomy. I'll not pay you a bad compliment by asking you to stay longer. Good night! We shall see you to-morrow, Claude. You know Aline won't excuse a day's absence. I should be very happy, Monsieur Caribert, should you look in on us now and then when you are passing; if indeed, you will deign to have an acquaintance who lives lower down than five thousand feet above the level of the sea. Good night, my lads,—no compliments—come, girls, to bed, to bed."

With these words, and a multitude of salutations, he retired into the cottage. Claude was accustomed to the ways of his anticipated father-in-law, and did not see any thing extraordinary in all this. As to Caribert, he was insensible to

the coldness and sarcasm of Moinard's manner; it was enough for him that he was invited to the house by the highest authority; he was disposed to consider every thing and every body warm and cordial, and he was quite resolved to give a speedy proof of his condescension.

On their way back to Claude's cottage, the friends seemed to have completely changed characters. Claude talked without a moment's cessation, so that one might have almost thought he had also changed his sex, (craving the sex's pardon) had not a woman been the sole subject of his chatter. He had always been fluent with Caribert in his praises of Aline, but he now exceeded all his former loquacity. He ran on in her praise, ringing every possible change into which it could be turned, and appealing at every moment to his companion for a confirmation of his eulogiums. But he found no reply in the voice of Caribert, although every encomium was deeply echoed in his heart. Claude had it all to himself as far as talking went, while Caribert

enjoyed in his own way, in secresy and silence, a full participation in all the pleasures of his friend. They parted at the little path which turned off close by Claude's cottage, and Caribert pursued his road up the mountain towards his own residence, to prepare, as he told his friend on parting, for a chase in the distant gorge of Governie, which was fixed for the following morning.

How the different parties passed this night it is hard precisely to say. Mannette declared that Aline disturbed her from lying down to getting up, heaving heavy sighs and muttering broken scraps of sentences in her sleep, which could scarcely be called sleep; and yet, that her countenance wore, notwithstanding, a constant smile from the time she was able to see it, when the dawn first peeped in at the lattice window. It was remarked by Claude's sisters, that he arose the morning after the fête with an air of freshness and triumph much unlike his usual timid and modest manner. He seemed proud of

having gained a victory over the obstinacy of Caribert, and happy in having made him sensible of what a treasure he was in hopes of one day possessing. We may guess how Caribert's hours were employed, for soon after day-break he was the first object seen by Claude, as the latter turned out upon the heath equipped for his morning sport.

"Why, Caribert," cried Claude, "you can scarcely have been in bed, if you have walked home and back since we parted last night. Where are you bound to? This is not the road to Governie."

"No, Claude, I have not been in bed. The fact is, that I loitered about the mountain thinking of one thing and another,—I scarcely know what, until the dawn was almost appearing; and when I reached home at last, I found my father quite restless and uneasy at my absence, and beginning to get ready for the chase, so I did not think it worth while to lie down and keep him waiting. That's the truth."

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S

"But you did not accompany him, it seems. How's that?"

"Faith, I scarcely know how. But I was disinclined to go. I believe the fact is that the dancing tired me last night."

"The devil it did! you didn't come down the hill just now like a tired man, for all that. What excuse did you make to your father?"

"Why to tell you the truth, Claude, I was obliged to invent a little bit of a lie. I told him I had a head ache—and in fact I have not been quite well," added Caribert, putting his hand to his side and drawing a long sigh.

"I am sorry for that, though," replied Claude; "will you step in and take something? The girls are all up. I have just had a cup of chocolate —real Bayonne, that was given us by Monsieur Moinard. Come and have a cup—it will refresh you."

"No, thank you, let's walk about a little. I like the sharp morning air."

"Well then, come up the mountain with me.

I am going after the eight izards that we saw grazing on Pic Arbizon last night, and looking down on us so saucily, while we were dancing. It's all in your way—it's up hill. I know you're not fond of the low grounds."

"Why no, not this morning, thank ye."

"What the deuce will you do then? What in the name of the Virgin brought you down this way?" asked Claude, smiling.

"Why you see, Claude, I thought it would be only civil to step over and ask your sisters how they were after the dance. One must be civil, you know, to the girls?"

"What, you've found out that at last, Caribert, have you? Come, that's good. Mount Perdu may move at last to Bagneres, in spite of the proverb. Miracles will never cease, that's certain." And here Claude indulged himself in a hearty laugh.

"The truth is, my dear Claude, your sisters were very kind to me last night, and I don't like to seem insensible, and I don't know how it was

but Jeanneton looked prettier than usual. She is the youngest, isn't she?"

"No, to be sure not. Aimée is twenty-two months her junior."

"Well, one would not have thought it. I'll step in and see the girls, Claude, if you go on after the enemy."

At these words a light seemed to break in all at once on Claude's perception; and it was accompanied by a warm ray of pleasure. It seemed as if the thing he most wished for on earth (except one) was coming about,—an attachment between his friend and his sister. Every thing appeared clear to him. He now easily accounted for Caribert's attention to Aline, and his not having spoken six words to Jeanneton the whole preceding evening. "He loves little Jeanneton just as I do Aline—he durst not speak to her—that's the whole secret," said Claude to himself, as he shook Caribert's hand heartily, and wished him good morning. Caribert saw with the keen eye of a lover, what was so legible on his friend's

fine, open, honest countenance. He could not undeceive him just then, nor yet reconcile himself to the double part he was playing, as it were, in spite of his conscience; but after loitering about for a few minutes as Claude walked quickly on, he at last called after him, "I say, Claude, just stop a minute—I say, what do you think? wouldn't it be but right—that is might it not look uncivil, or—not downright uncivil, but inattentive, not just to step over and ask Monsieur Moinard how he does? You know he asked us last night; you remember that, don't you? You heard him?"

"Oh, it is not at all necessary, my good fellow," replied Claude; "I don't stand on ceremony there. I am quite at home with the family. Besides I know that Monsieur Moinard is gone out to Sarancolin this morning."

"Is he?" exclaimed Caribert, briskly; and then added involuntarily, but in an under voice, "thank God!"

"What do you say?" asked Claude.

"Say! Oh! nothing, but that it is rather unfortunate.—But Claude, you wouldn't step over to inquire after Mademoiselle Aline? Do you know I think she coughed a little last night on her way home: and she expects you to-day, remember—her father said that. You remarked that, didn't you?"

"Oh, that was nothing; at all events she does not expect me at five o'clock in the morning. Besides, I'll call as I go round the hill on my return home, and hope to leave an izard there in the place of that packet of chocolate, do you see; and as to Aline's having a little cough, why you don't think she minds such a thing as that? You take her for something wonderfully delicate."

"Oh, not at all. It was entirely on your account I mentioned it; because, you know, I should not like you to seem inattentive to your mistress."

"My dear friend!" exclaimed Claude, giving Caribert's hand a squeeze, which seemed to shoot

to his heart like a dagger's point. "But to tell you the honest truth," added Claude, "I never go near Aline when her father is out of the way. I am somehow awkward and uneasy at the thoughts of being alone with her."

"Well, never mind that," said Caribert, a new hope overpowering his passing feelings of self-reproach; "I don't care if I go down with you myself—sooner than you should seem wanting in civility."

"No, no," replied Claude, "I'll be hanged if you shall outdo me in generosity. No, go in and see little Jeanneton, that will do better. I am sure, into the bargain, that Moinard will be back by nine o'clock, for he expects a convoy of tobacco from Jaca at that hour."

"Does he, indeed, so soon?"

"Why did you know any thing of it?"

"Oh, not a word, but—you see it is entirely on your account—I am anxious that you shouldn't be late in your visit—you have no time to lose, for those eight bouncers may lead you a

long chase. So good bye, Claude, we may meet again to-day.—Good bye."

"Adieu, my dear fellow, adieu! success and good speed!" were the parting words of Claude; and Caribert having gazed after him for a moment, turned his steps towards the cottage.

After a short time passed in the ceremonies of a formal visit, to which the embarrassment of Caribert and the astonishment of the three sisters added a more than common awkwardness, he rose to take leave; and having professed a change of his original plan, and an intention of rejoining Claude on the hills, he took his leave. He lounged slowly up the mountain as long as he thought there was any chance of observation from the cottage, and then returning round a projecting angle of rock, he struck off at his quickest pace straight towards the north, in the direction of Moinard's residence. His mind was full of Aline, and as he argued by an analogy very common, I believe, with lovers of his temperament, he could not help believing she was

thinking of him. Now without pushing too far the theory of secret sympathies, I hope I am not out of nature in saying, that Aline reckoned it an almost moral certainty, that Caribert would pay her a visit that morning. He did not say a word of the kind the evening before. But whatever was the cause of the feeling, obvious or occult, so it was that Aline was loitering about the skirts of a patch of pine-wood, at some distance from the house, and on an eminence that commanded a full view of the only way by which Caribert was at all likely to approach. She had not been long thus stationed, when the figure of a man, approaching rapidly, caught her eye. She started, and looked again—it might be Claude. But no, the blue sash of the evening before, the stature shorter than his, the bearing loftier, and the step more firm, left no doubt on her mind as to the identity, even before the subdued beam of the naturally fiery eye was quite apparent, as Caribert took off his cap, and made his respectful yet animated salutation.

CHAPTER VI.

I MUST leave to the imagination of my readers the particulars of the stolen interview which concluded the last chapter. I had no means of coming at them accurately, and should have spoiled the recital by a pretended description of what may be easily fancied, and at best but difficultly detailed. The lovers had to sustain a severe contest of conflicting sentiments; but these were evidently increased, as the full embarrassment of their situation ripened during the four months that followed their eventful meeting at Claude's cottage.

Aline gave the reins to her strong attachment with a clear conscience, for its progress was not

attended with one act or thought that could be construed into a reproach. Caribert was the most respectful though the most passionate of lovers. He prized her modesty while he almost worshipped her mind, and he felt that, in her influence over him, at least, she was as far superior to her station and her associates, as he knew himself to be above his. I am not, in recording this, at all desirous of making my readers forget the rank in life of this couple, or of throwing any mystifying exaggerations over their character and manners. I am merely judging them and painting them, as they knew themselves—in comparison with their fellows.

But added to the strength of Aline's understanding, which told her she had no reproaches to make herself, she had also a very feeling heart, which was continually whispering her that she was about to cause much unhappiness to others. Claude had never said that he loved her; that is, he had never said so in the vulgar tongue; but he was everlastingly declaring his passion in that

natural and voiceless language whose idioms are of all others the easiest to comprehend, for they are suited alike to the apprehensions of the prince and the peasant. She was perfectly aware of the state of his heart, and of the suffering he was preparing for himself. She wished to check this, but to do so effectually, she must have betrayed her attachment to his friend; and the price she was forced to pay for its indulgence was her sympathy with the anticipated sufferings of Claude. Then she was contravening the avowed wishes of her father, and obliged to conceal her own under an appearance of contentment which it was almost intolerable to assume, for she was the most uneasy of mortals, except in her stolen meetings with Caribert, and even then any thing but free from anxiety.

But if she had her cares, and it will be admitted that she had, those of Caribert were a thousand times more poignant, for they were founded on the conviction of his hypocrisy and

injustice to more than one individual. To attain his purpose of being frequently in the presence of Aline, and almost always near her, he was forced to put on the treacherous semblance of another attachment, not only to the guileless Claude, but to the innocent Jeanneton its pretended object. By such a pretence alone he was able to account to the former for his daily visits to the cottage, and his nightly lingerings with the circle of it unsuspecting tenants. It was very rarely that he could, by the greatest stretch of ingenuity, snatch a stolen visit to the clump of pine-trees during the day time; for to make it safe a concurrence of lucky circumstances was necessary: the absence of Moinard in one direction, that of Claude in another, and the uninterrupted occupation of the three sisters within the house. It would be endless to enumerate the difficulties in the way of this coincidence. In wet weather Moinard was generally at home. When it was fair, either Jeanneton or her sisters were sure to be employed on the hills, attending

the little flock of sheep or goats, knitting or in some other out-of-door work; while the path down to the place of rendezvous, and even that spot itself, were quite visible from an hundred paces beyond the cottage. Often too, when all circumstances up the hill favoured his views, and Caribert, after many manœuvres to ensure them, moved downwards, breathless with expectation, and with a thousand tender and animated feelings ready to pour out in a flood of natural eloquence into the ear of her who was their inspiration, he has reached the grove, where he pictured her anxiously awaiting his arrival, and found a chill and comfortless blank in the place where she ought to have been. Many embarrassing obstacles have on these occasions kept her at home; but it was not within the range of Caribert's mind, to seek for relief in such disappointments, by picturing hers, and sympathising with them, rather than brooding over his own. Every check of this kind turned inwards upon him, and acting on an irritable temper and ner-

vous constitution, made him dissatisfied and angry with all the world, not excepting himself, and even her! The fit once over, he execrated his violence of feeling, and found in its examination another subject of self-reproach. Then, after a long and fruitless watch, he wound his way wearily up towards home; where he met with a mixture of harsh reproval from his father, vexed at his frequent absences, and a teazing display of affection from his mother, which was not a bit more soothing.

He made several visits to Moinard's cottage, accompanied by Claude, who let the old man into the unreal secret of Caribert's affection for Jeanneton, and thus quieted all his alarms. He was quite deceived by the circumspect air of the actual lovers—but there was nothing in these snatches of happiness that satisfied the impetuous soul of Caribert, thirsting for a long draught of undisturbed and secret joy. Alone with Claude he was on thorns. He could speak *to* Aline for ever—*of her* never. Her name seemed

buried in the deep recesses of his breast; and the babbling praises of his friend were only torments to him, as so far short of what he felt, but could not utter.

It was thus that night only was suited to his purpose, and scarcely one passed over him without a stolen hour or hurried moment, as circumstances stood his friend. The arrival of the Spanish smugglers, or the sound sleep of Moinard, permitted Aline on most occasions to quit the house; and if the weather, or matters within were such as to prevent her reaching the pine grove, Caribert was sure to come down in spite of her remonstrances, often as far as the cattle sheds, to snatch one short embrace, one low muttered "good night," or "God bless you," and think himself well paid for his time and his temerity. But, although his frame was as robust as his mind was ardent, this continued and unsparing exposure to the night air in all weather, and in the winter season, began to make visible ravages upon him. The snow now lay

thick upon the mountain tops, the chill airs swept incessantly across them, and heavy mists settled early in the evenings along the whole chain of hills. The fevered state of Caribert's mind was in unison with his physical temperament. Little or no repose, poor nourishment, continual damp and cold, brought on frequent attacks of illness that he despised too much to attend to. All the habits of his life were changed. For many weeks he had never taken his pike-staff in his hand, or followed the chace. The violent exercise to which his former pursuits had forced him, was ill replaced by his walks down the mountain, and the chill and shivering delays which were often the fruit of his exertions. Every thing seemed going wrong with both his mind and body. The harassing energies of the first fell with dreadful weight upon the latter; and this in its turn seemed to throw the whole burthen of its evils upon the brain; for rheumatisms, rheums, and such common consequences of a life like Caribert's, seemed repulsed

from his constitution, by some powerful amulet, that it might have puzzled even the doctors to analyze.

He made light of physical pain; but moral suffering began to bow him down. His hunter companions looked on him coldly. They never loved him, for he plainly felt them to be his inferiors. His only claim on their regard, intrepid daring, was now no longer evident. He seemed to shrink from their bold pursuits. The wolves pressed on towards the flocks and the cottages, urged by the early approach of winter; the bears growled fiercely round the hamlets; but Caribert was no longer sensible to their spirit-stirring notes of defiance. Reproaches and sarcastic hints met him at every turn. He bit his lips, and his distempered spirit fed fiercely on such nourishment. He had a thousand times resolved to open his mind to Claude, to undeceive Jeanneton, and boldly demand the hand of Aline from her father. But when he reflected on the web of many falsehoods in

which he was entangled, his proud mind could not brook the humiliation, and he went on in his career in that wild and uncalculating way so common to tempers like his, and so much the more uncontrolable, from the strong contrast it presented to his former reserved and isolated existence. The eternal attentions of his mother, the condolements of Claude, the open hearted sorrow of Jeanneton, and the sympathy of her sisters, did nothing for the improvement of the state of health which they one and all deplored. Aline, the most interested of all, knew nothing of her lover's illness. However he might suffer when away from her—however his gnawing remorse might fly upwards, when Jeanneton smiled sweetly and innocently on him, or Claude opened his secrets to him with a brother's freedom—in the presence of his heart's idol he knew no ailment. His nerves were free, his spirit seemed at large, and the stream of his impassioned language in those moments of hope and

happiness shewed nothing of the bitterness of the source from which it flowed. He saw her latterly entirely at night. The pale reflexion of a wintry moon beam thrown back from a bed of snow, was calculated to display unfavourably his cheeks, which were wan and hollow. But his bright eye, his fluent speech, and animated accents, gave the lie to apprehensions of his altered state; and he parried her remarks on that visible thinness which could not be concealed, by affectionate and arch reproaches on the encouragement she gave to a passion, which he told her never made men fat.

But once out of her sight he had no shadow of gaiety reflected from the sombre ground of his thoughts and feelings. He left her often with a light and buoyant forgetfulness of all but her; but as soon as he had watched her to the house, and heard the door close as she entered, the spell seemed dissolved, and he trudged homewards with a heavy heart, and bursting head.

The day at last approached which was fixed

on by destiny to terminate *this* state of suffering. The month of March had arrived; and though spring had already begun to wave his light wings, in the genial warmth of the valleys, winter still maintained possession of the mountains. One morning, when old Larcole, Caribert's father, had ineffectually tried to persuade his son to accompany him to the chace, the latter set out to pay his accustomed visit to Claude's cottage; and, after seeing that all was right there, the sisters being employed within, and Claude gone out to shoot, he proceeded to the pine-grove, and was disappointed by not finding Aline, as she had promised. He was met by Mannette who acted the part of a very faithful confidant, and occasional scout and messenger. She was proud of being in the secret, of she knew not exactly what, between Aline and her lover, and she the more readily obeyed their injunctions of secrecy as to their meetings, from the circumstance of Caribert's constant good nature towards her. He had made her several

presents, never came openly to the cottage without bringing her a large bouquet of rhododendron, wild roses, or odorous myrtle, and had completely won her heart by a gift of the eagle, by which my readers will recollect I was saluted on my first visit to the cottage, as well as the izard, which had grown to be so tame and tractable in a couple of years. The business of Mannette's meeting with Caribert was to give him the unpleasant intelligence, that Claude was at that moment in the house with Aline, having come round the mountain to deposit a portion of his morning's spoils. Caribert had no sooner heard this news than he quitted the grove; desiring Mannette to assure her sister he would be there at night fall, and hurried fast towards home, cursing his ill luck, and the double duplicity which forced him to fly the presence of one whom he knew himself to have deceived.

In this mood he sped along his path, but not undiscovered: Claude, during his visit at Moinard's, perceived a confused hesitation in

Aline's manner, which he was strangely puzzled to account for; nor did the appearance of Mannette, who kept her secret better than her countenance, tend to remove his astonishment. When he rose to take his leave, Aline, for the first time in her life, pressed a continuance of his visit; but the invitation sounded so oddly and so awkwardly, that he found it the most embarrassing point of all, and after a few minutes hesitation he quitted the house. He soon reached the pine-grove, passed it, and as it ceased to impede his view of the naked hill, the first object which caught his eye was Caribert, moving rapidly on, not in the direction of Claude's cottage, but more to the right towards his own.

This one glance was enough. It was like the movement of some mental spring that opened at once before the brain the whole pageant which had been so long concealed from view; a pageant of past scenes and hideous transformations —fond hopes, now withered—fair prospects, de-

solate—a trusted friend, deceitful! All this, and much more of pain and bitterness seemed at once to burst on Claude. He turned aside into the pine-grove, clasped his hands, and leaned his back against a tree, looking after Caribert with a fixed and fascinated gaze. Thus placed, what varieties of thoughts must he have had! What a revival of every scene or word that had passed or been uttered for months! What a minute recollection of thousands of little circumstances and hints and looks, that had been unheeded while they went by, but which now spoke too plainly! But, passing over conjectures as to the emotions which rushed confusedly upon him—those rapid sensations of anguish,

> Which ten times faster glide than the sun-beams,
> Driving back shadows over low'ring hills—

we must suppose him to have reached his home; ever till this hour the home of peace and hope.

Here he had a most difficult and painful cha-

racter to support. His presence had always been the greatest source of comfort to his sisters; he was so frank, so amiable, so communicative. Whenever he came in, they were sure to have a lively and pleasant detail of his day's adventures, his visit to Aline, his meeting with Caribert, or something or other connected with these two objects of his affections and friendship. Any thing like violent feeling, or above all, like concealment, was so foreign to him, that on the present occasion he found himself beyond all things embarrassed. He was a novice in deceit, but he did all he could to fill the part, said he was ill and fatigued, and turned off more particular remarks upon his silence and agitation, how and with what success he could.

Caribert had in the meantime arrived at his father's door, and he never approached it in a state of greater discontent and irritation. He was quite prepared for any event which might rouse the mind, or wound the feelings. The

scene which presented itself as he entered the house, was perfectly calculated to effect the double consummation.

Close to the door lay his father's leathern doublet, and his woollen jacket, the latter stained with blood, partially torn, and bearing marks of earth, as if the wearer had fallen after a struggle. A short hunting-pike broken across was beside it, and as Caribert turned his quick glance in search of the owner of these relics of a contest or an accident, he saw him sitting on a chair by the window, one arm bared to the shoulder, lacerated and bleeding, while with the other the old man was caressing one of the shaggy dogs, which lay helpless on a stool beside him, piteously moaning, and looking up with tearful eyes. The old woman was just beginning to bind up her husband's wounds, with bands of linen, steeped in some homely preparation, when Caribert rushed forward, shocked, and with a startling abruptness.

"My God! what is all this?" exclaimed he, taking his father's hand in his—"What has happened? Who has done this?"

"Who!" cried the father angrily, snatching his hand away, and fixing his eyes on Caribert with a reproachful expression, "Who! you may well ask that—you did it."

"I! What do you mean?" said Caribert,—"Tell me what has happened that I may revenge you, if"—

"Come, come, no bullying now—it's too late. The coward that shrinks from his duty and leaves his old father to run all risks for his support, has no business to prate of revenge."

Part of this retort passed lightly over Caribert. He knew he was no coward, and it was the first time the word had ever been insinuated as applying to him. He only thought of his father: and turning to his mother asked her for explanation in a peremptory tone.

Before she could reply, the father cried fiercely, "Come, come, my lad, no insolence to your

mother, or I'll fell you to the earth even with this wounded arm! Give over, Marie, give over. Let alone that old withered branch—you have bound it well enough where the bark was stripped off. 'Tis nothing, I don't feel it. Let's see what we can do for our poor murdered Franchette here."

Upon this he turned to the dog beside him, and Caribert seeing there was no serious injury done to his father's arm, fixed his observation also upon his favourite bitch that had followed him too in many a hard chace, and had only given up her attendance on his steps, since they had been turned down towards the low grounds, instead of leading her, as they were formerly wont to do, to the most rugged haunts of the bears, the objects of her inveterate hatred.

"Aye, you may well look at her, and never hold up your head again," said the old man to Caribert; but less harshly than he spoke before. "See how she wags her tail and wants to lick your hand, poor thing!"

Caribert was about to raise her up, when the old man roared out in his fiercest tone. "What are you going to do? Don't touch her;" and then, as if all at once melted by the misfortune he was about to announce, he turned aside his head, and sobbed out in smothered accents, "Let her alone, Caribert—both her hind legs are broken."

"Oh, heavens! is it possible?" exclaimed Caribert, throwing himself on his knees beside the poor animal, and leaning forwards his face which she licked with her hot and feverish tongue, as if the rain of tears that flowed from his eyes had brought relief and refreshment to her pain.

"My poor dear Franchette!" continued he, "Why was I not with you when this happened. Oh! if you could but speak, you would not leave me thus cruelly, without the miserable satisfaction of knowing how all this came about."

Here poor Franchette howled piteously, as if

condoling with the kind and sorrowful tone of her young master. The tender-hearted mother joined her loud sobs to the lamenting tone. Old Larcole turned round towards them, and seeing the evident sufferings of Caribert, he gave him his hand and exclaimed; "Well, well, my boy, hold up. This is too much; there's no help now; and crying like children does no good to broken bones." He here wiped his eyes with the cuff of his knitted flannel waistcoat, and rose up. He gave a turn or two up and down the room, hemmed and coughed, and opened his shirt collar, as if he wanted air, struck his chest two or three times with his open hand, and spoke as follows:

"Stand up, Caribert, be a man! I'll tell you how it happened—though after all there's no time for delaying now, for we must do something with the poor bitch. 'Tis useless to let her linger in pain."

"Why, for God's sake, Larcole," exclaimed the wife, who was fomenting the wounded legs

of her dumb patient; "what do you mean by that? you wouldn't think surely of—— What do you mean?"

"Oh, it's needless to talk, you see, Marie. Go on with the warm cloths and the *Guimauve.** Perhaps the swelling may abate. We must do the best for the poor animal, any how, just as we would hope to be done by in a helpless case."

Caribert saw that the case of poor Franchette was indeed hopeless. Her legs were fractured in several places, swelled dreadfully, and quite out of the reach of any cure but death. He stood up, and approaching his father, begged him to tell him briefly what had occurred.

"Why, it was nothing but what you might guess easily enough without my telling you," said the old man. "You know, Caribert, you refused to go with me this morning."

"Aye, I know it," muttered Caribert.

"Well, then, Simon Guilloteaux, who was to

* Marsh-mallows.

have met me at Lake Escoubous, to attack that cursed brown that has been prowling about for the last week, failed me also. He did not come —and I thought I'd have a poke at the rugged scoundrel in his cave by myself; that is, with Pero and my poor Franchette here—and you see what a pretty affair I made of it;—that's all."

"Why, good God! you did not attack the monster by yourself?"

"Yes, yes, but I did; and hadn't that pike smashed against the rock with the first stab I made at old Bruin, I should have brought him here on my back, to show you what you may expect to do at sixty-three, if you change your present lazy courses."

"Was it he that wounded you?"

"To be sure it was. He threw out his damned ugly paw, and would have had me clean into the cave, I do believe, if Franchette had not fastened on him; and when he loosed his gripe of me to break her poor legs, he must have

killed her on the spot (and it would have been well for her, after all), if Pero had not flown at him behind. He then retreated into his den, and you may judge I had enough to do, to carry off the wounded bitch and get clear home;—but to-morrow!"

"Aye, father, to-morrow!" cried Caribert, catching the fierce tone and look of the old man, "I swear with you that poor Franchette shall have her revenge."

"Give me your hand again, my fine lad. Aye, this is something like. This is being yourself. This is better;—one minute like this—a thousand times better than a whole month's dancing and smirking after that hop-o'my-thumb Jeanneton:—is it not, now, tell me the truth?"

"Jeanneton!" echoed Caribert, in a half whisper, a contemptuous smile on his lip, and with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Right, my boy," exclaimed the delighted father, slapping him on the back, "I knew you'd

get over that stumbling-block when the spur stuck in the right place. Yes, I always said so to your mother—didn't I, Marie? Why, the loss of a dog, and a scratch on my arm, is poor payment for the pleasure this gives me. Aye, aye, Caribert, we'll punish that ruffian to-morrow, and hunt many a long day together yet. Time enough for courting and fooling twenty years hence. No way that to spend the prime of life. I was close to forty when I first saw your mother, and the whole business was begun and ended in a fortnight.—Wasn't it, Marie?"

The reply was stifled by the loud and melancholy moanings of the wounded animal; when the old man exclaimed, "By heavens, I can stand this no longer! my poor bitch, you shall not ask for relief in vain. Lift her up gently, Caribert, and take her out to the garden. Wrap something round her. There, take that old jacket, that will do. Many a fine fellow lies in these hills in a shabbier winding-sheet."

Caribert proceeded to perform these sad duties, and his father took down his short-barrelled gun that hung on two pegs over the fire-place. This was the time for the kind nature of the wife to take a prominent part. She saw the purpose of these preparations, and interposed with sobs and sighs, and entreaties, that it might at least be deferred. But all this was ineffectual. Both father and son saw the necessity of the thing; and they quickly over-powered her resistance, by pointing out the cruelty of protracting a suffering for which there was but one cure. The poor woman submitted at last. She cried like a child as she saw Caribert fold the old flannel jacket round the animal, lift her up in his arms, and go out of the cottage. She next observed the father, who, having put an additional bullet into his gun, and examined the flint and the priming, soon followed; and at this near approach of the tragedy she sat down upon the side of the bed, laid her head on the bolster, and put both her hands to her

ears, that she might not hear the sound of the death-shot.

The mournful executioners passed quickly into the little garden, and Caribert, walking up to the farthest end, placed his burthen on the bank, which in the summer was thickly studded with the small wild strawberry of the Upper Pyrenees, but was now covered with snow. While Franchette was in his arms she uttered no moan, and looked almost contented, and Caribert thought for an instant that she could even sigh out her sufferings without pain on such a pillow. But, when he put her down, she gave one, and but one, heart-piercing yell. Caribert's eyes swam anew with tears, and he saw nothing more. The old man approached—" now then, Caribert," said he, " stand aside.— Let me get close to her."

Caribert stepped away a pace or two, and put his hand before his eyes. He expected every instant to hear the fatal report, and felt his

eye-lids, his teeth, and his hands close more firmly together, as the delay of each second seemed to compress and wind up all his nerves. He at length opened his eyes, and looked under his hand; and instead of seeing his father as he expected, with the muzzle close to the heart of the bitch, and his finger on the trigger, he perceived him, with his back turned towards her, the gun loosely hanging in one hand, and the other holding his handkerchief to his face.

"Why, father, father," exclaimed Caribert, "For Heaven's sake, what's this? Won't you put the poor thing out of pain?"

"I'll tell you what, Caribert—it's more than I'm man for, I cannot do it," was his reply.

"Give me the gun, then; this is child's play, indeed!" said Caribert. But on taking it from his father, and advancing close to the bank, he saw poor Franchette silently and stiffly lying where he had placed her, her eyes turned up and her mouth open, her tongue hanging out, and a

little stream of black blood trickling over it upon the snow.

"Why, father," cried he, starting back, "she's dead! stone dead, by Heavens!"

"Dead!" said the father, "what do you mean?" and then stepping towards her, and seeing her to be really, unequivocally dead, he added, "She is, by the Virgin! When the monster caught her in his gripe, he must have not only broken her legs, but her faithful heart as well!"

Certain that some internal hurt had saved them the painful task they had contemplated, they rejoiced at the weakness which had caused their hesitation. Caribert felt that his resentment was doubly excited against the bear, by the fact of his having caused her actual death; and the old man was happy that his poor wife would be spared the reflection of her being sacrificed by his hand. While Caribert dug a hole in which to lay the body, his father went in to

summon his Marie to attend the burial ceremony. He found her lying as he left her, and when she saw him enter, she rose and exclaimed,

"Why, Larcole, is it all over? is the poor thing murdered—dead I mean? I heard no shot."

"Because none was fired. She *is* dead, Marie, and not murdered, thank God! Come out and see her laid in her cold grave!"

The old couple went out, and while Caribert placed the stiff body in the pit he had dug, Larcole flung in several shovel-fulls of snow exclaiming—"Well, my poor faithful bitch, there's a bright pure shroud for you at any rate. When the snow melts, and the wild strawberries bloom over your grave, I may not be above ground myself, perhaps! But no matter, your mistress here and Caribert will heave a sigh for you, and—Come, come Caribert; what are you wiping your eyes for? Cover in the earth and let's go and have some dinner. There now,

that's very well, nothing can be better. Come along."

They all went in accordingly; but not a spoonful of the venison soup, nor a bit of the bouilli, was tasted that day.

An hour or two after the dinner-time was occupied in preparation for the next morning's work. The old man had to make ready a new handle for his pike, and Caribert had to look over and arrange all his hunting accoutrements. As he laid them one by one on his bed, the touch of every separate article, and the observation of their marks of former service, gave fresh impulse to his determination, sorrow for his buried favourite falling upon each new incitement like oil on wreaths of fire.

When all was ready, and the shades of evening sweeping fast over the western mountains, he begged of his father to lie down and repose till dawn. The old man did so willingly, for he was grieved and fatigued; and, though he said little about it, it was evident to his watch-

ful helpmate that he suffered considerable pain from his inflamed and excoriated arm. While she applied fomentations to it, of the simple remedy which, although it had been applied ineffectually to poor Franchette, was really most efficacious, Caribert took his cap and walking stick, and said he would just step down to Claude's, to tell them not to expect him in the morning according to his promise.

Old Larcole was lying on his back in bed, the wounded arm outside, receiving the cares of his wife, his eyes closed, half from sleep and as much from pain, when he heard Caribert announce his departure. He started up suddenly, and leaning with his arms on the side of the bed he looked sternly at him and exclaimed; "Take care, Caribert; something tells me you are going to abandon me to-morrow."

"For God's love, father," replied the son, "how can you say so! I swear to you that nothing on earth shall keep me from you. I will

be back by midnight at latest, as sure as the stars are in heaven."

His energy satisfied the old man, who answered, "Remember the oath, my boy, and I am content. I will expect you. But by all that you have sworn to, and by heaven itself into the bargain, if you are not here at peep of day, I will go myself, disabled as I am, and kill that bear or die in the attempt! Go now to your sweetheart, and remember your oath," added he, sinking back, and shutting his eyes again.

"Never fear, father, never fear," said Caribert, closing the door after him.

CHAPTER VII.

While all this was passing, Claude had been holding a long parley with his first impressions on the subject of Caribert's treachery. The natural tenor of his feelings was benevolent and generous; and after some hours of miserable certainty, he began to enjoy the imperfect satisfaction of doubt. He thought he might have been too hasty; that even if Caribert had been clandestinely visiting Aline, it might have been on some secret affair, of which he should know the whole in good time; something perhaps concerning her father, "or even," thought he, "some project connected with my happiness!

Good God! if such should turn out to be the case!"

Just as he had inwardly uttered this exclamation, the door opened, and Caribert entered the cottage. The blood flew into Claude's cheeks, but he mechanically stretched out his hand to his vistor, who took it without observing his countenance, in the dusk of the chamber.

"Ah! you are most welcome this evening, Caribert, we never wanted you more," said Jeanneton; "here's poor Claude quite gloomy and sad, we don't know what to make of him."

"So much the worse," replied Caribert, "for I am in no mood to make him merry, I assure you."

"Why, has any thing happened to you?" asked Claude.

"Not exactly to me—but there's my father wounded by a bear, and Franchette killed, that's something, isn't it?"

Exclamations of surprise and sorrow burst

from the listening group, and the three sisters offered with one voice to go off immediately to assist his mother in her nursing.

"When did this happen?" asked one of the sisters.

"When I was making a fool of myself here this morning."

"Making a fool of yourself, Caribert?" said Jeanneton, her eyes filling with tears.

"It's well," muttered Claude, "if you have not been making fools of other people."

"I wish we had known of this misfortune before," exclaimed the eldest sister; "you may be sure, Caribert, we shouldn't have kept you here when you ought to have been with your poor father."

"There's no use in your reproaching me," replied he in a sulky tone, "I know my own business and my own duty."

Jeanneton saw his temper, and not for the first time, for he had been often subject to fits of peevishness, in the midst of her kindness

and his own abstraction. She said in a soothing way,

"My dear Caribert, no one means to reproach you; dont't think that; but tell me, where have you been all day, ever since you left us?"

"Where have I been? Why at home, to be sure."

"What the *whole* day?" demanded Claude, anxiously.

"Didn't I say so?" retorted Caribert roughly. "What do you all mean by questioning me in this manner?"

Claude walked up and down the room; Jeanneton laid her hand on Caribert's, but he drew his away abruptly; and the eldest sister, who was of a hot temper, exclaimed, "I really don't see, Caribert, why you should be so cross with us all, your best friends. I think you might have walked about the hills a little, to cool your anger, instead of coming here to vent it on us,"

"I thank you, Mademoiselle Catrine;" replied he, rising; "but I did'nt think it amiss to

give you a call, and say 'good evening,' before I went out to-morrow morning to kill the bear that wounded my father, or be killed myself—for one of the two shall happen, as I am a man!"

This was touching a chord that harmonized with the best feelings of the listeners, for they all, two of them more particularly, were as much alive to the danger of Caribert as their own. Claude stopt short,—and Jeanneton, unable to suppress her emotions any longer, started from her seat, caught hold of Caribert's hand as he was darting from the door, and burst into tears.

"Stay, stay, for Heaven's sake, Caribert!" sobbed she. "Is this the way you would quit us? Is this the farewell you make me? I never thought you had so much cruelty in you."

"Let me go now, Jeanneton, there's a good girl," said he, shaking her off, "such fooling as this torments me."

With these words he walked away, and the whole party, stupified more or less at the scene,

were for a moment silent. Jeanneton stood leaning against the door, looking after, him, through her tears; until Claude, after a minute's pause, exclaimed "There must be something wrong with him—I see that clearly. Perhaps I have been injuring him, after all, by my suspicions!"

"Suspicions!" echoed the sisters, but in an enquiring tone.

"Never mind," said Claude, "this is no time to explain, I'll go after him, and have the whole cleared up one way or another. Let me pass, Jeanneton. There, kiss me—all may be well yet. I shall be back soon, girls, depend on it."

As he stepped out, Caribert's figure was scarcely perceptible. It was nearly dark, and Claude was just going to halloo to him to stop, until he reflected that in his angry mood that might not please him; and in order to come up with him, he cut up the mountain to intersect his homeward path. He kept his eye all the while on his object; and with a pang of mingled conviction, astonishment and rage, he saw him

suddenly turn out of his road, and strike off round the projecting rock, formerly mentioned, in a direct line for the pine grove. The first impulse would have led Claude to overtake, and all at once pour out his upbraidings on him. But he instantaneously determined to follow him at a cautious distance, and wait until positive evidence was before him, to authorize and add weight to the flood of reproaches, which were all ready to overwhelm the culprit. He accordingly followed at a slow pace, with a throbbing but determined heart, prepared for whatever result might come; and even when he lost sight of Caribert in the increasing darkness, he was as sure of his track, as if the instinct of the bloodhound had been joined to the resentment of the man.

Aline was entering the place of rendezvous on one side, when Caribert came in at the other. She answered the loud whisper which asked if she was there, by the sweetest of all sounds to a lover's ear—the quickened step rustling mysteri-

ously through the brambles of a sombre grove, the short-breathed sight of welcome and impatience, and next, the half uttered expressions of happiness, when she leaned her head forward to meet his ardent embrace. Caribert seemed to forget for a moment all the inquietudes and angry feelings of the day, and he told his story of what had passed in a clear and collected manner. When he announced his intention of accompanying his father on his expedition of vengeance the following morning, the womanish feelings of Aline began to rise up in her bosom. She did not attempt to dissuade him from his enterprise; but just at the moment that Claude reached the spot, (every nerve trembling as he crept cautiously on) and listened to the murmuring of the voices, he heard the following dialogue.

Aline.—No, I should rather urge you to go than wish you to shrink back—But surely you ought to take some assistance.

Caribert.—No, no, the business shall be mine, and mine only. I will prove that I have lost

none of my former power. You don't doubt my resolution?

Aline.—God forbid! no, dearest Caribert, but I know you are ill to-night. Your forehead and your hands are burning hot, and could I but see your face, I am sure it must bear the marks of fever.

Caribert.—Even so, my girl, it is so much the better—my arm will be the stronger.

Aline.—I hope it will, but still a companion or two would ensure your object, and remove my fears.

Caribert.—Whom would you have me ask? you would not wish me to humble myself to Guilloteaux and the others who have so often reproached my idleness of late?

Aline.—No indeed I would not, but there is one who has never reproached you—poor Claude.

Caribert.—Yes, yes, he does at all times, absent or present. The sight of him or the

thought of him is quite enough—I am beginning to hate him, in spite of myself.

Aline.—You ought rather to hate me for turning your heart from so true a friend!

Caribert.—Hate you Aline! Oh God! if I could but tell you how I love you!

Here the sounds of a repetition of embraces came to the ears of Claude, like the hissing of so many serpents.—He crept still closer to the speakers, and the dialogue went on.

Caribert.—You have named the last man in the world from whom I could deign to ask aid of any kind. Besides I am not pleased at his coming so much here. You ought not to encourage him, Aline.

Aline.—Do you think me capable of such baseness? Do you suppose I could pretend to him what I don't feel?

This was a blow as severe as it was unintended to the feelings of Caribert, for Aline had never dreamt of his pretended attachment to

Jeanneton. He had studiously avoided the mention of his deception, which he was quite sure she would not have permitted, even though their intercourse were to be sacrificed to its discontinuance. He was therefore sorely hurt by her present remark; and his irritation, as is common in such cases, disposed him to turn upon the objects least blameable and most injured. He replied, "I think you ought at once to tell him to give up his attentions, and to keep away entirely from you."

Aline.—Heavens! how could I do that? What would his sisters think of me?

Caribert.—What need you care for his sisters? they are as odious to me as he is.

Aline.—My dear Caribert—you don't know what you are saying. What's the matter with you?

Caribert.—I tell you but the truth, Aline—and in fact this whole farce must have an end. Why do you know, since I must confess it, that foolish girl, Jeanneton, appears to have taken a

fancy to me, and teazes me to death by her attentions; and I think that the whole set, brother and sisters, have a design upon me.

"Villain!" exclaimed Claude, at these words, unable longer to contain himself, almost choked with rage, and bursting through the tangled briars—"Villain, come forward, that I may tear your false heart from your bosom!"

Aline, terrified at the recognition of his voice, in a tone so new and so shocking, uttered a scream, and threw herself close upon Caribert's breast. He was thunderstruck. He could not reply, but clasping her firmly to him with his left arm, he struck fiercely with the other in the direction of the voice. His stick met only the passive resistance of the over-hanging branches.

"Where are you, liar, odious, treacherous liar?" vociferated Claude: "are you flying from me? Stand, coward, stand!"

Caribert rushed towards the voice, dragging Aline with him, and dealing forward in the darkness his harmless blows.

"Oh, Claude! Oh, Caribert!" cried Aline, "stop in mercy! What would you do?" and here throwing herself between the enraged but invisible rivals, she put forward one hand. It met with Claude's outstretched arm, which she grasped firmly; adding, in accents faint from her fright, "Claude, dear Claude, forbear! if my father hears this, I am undone!"

"What, Aline! do you supplicate the pitiful spy?" asked Caribert bitterly. "do you call the sculking wretch, *dear* Claude? Why cannot my arm reach the injurious dog!"

Claude was arrested on the spot, his whole tide of vengeful feelings for an instant stopped. The touch of Aline's fingers acted like magic on him. He caught her arm, and while he trembled in every joint, he pressed the hostage hand repeatedly to his lips. She left it unhesitatingly in his. His embrace was like the kiss of peace, yet she shuddered when she felt Caribert's heart throbbing against hers. "For the sake of

Heaven, Claude," cried she, "I conjure you, leave this fatal spot. This is a moment of destruction to us all. We know not what we are doing or saying."

"You have saved him," replied Claude—"I leave him in his guilt."

The outrageous Caribert here burst from her hold, but she again folded her arms round him, and prevented his advance. Claude stepped back, and as he retreated, said in a suffocating voice, "I go, Aline: I leave you and him for ever. Thank God, the darkness and your influence have spared him from my passionate revenge. Let him live in misery and disgrace—but for the sake of your own happiness, of your own character, shun him as you would the plague. I acquit you of all share in his infamy. I have heard enough from both your lips, to let me know the truth. If the serpent has won your heart, I cannot blame you; but expect nothing from the wretch who could betray his

bosom friend, and basely deceive and calumniate my innocent sister.—Adieu, Aline, you shall never see me more! Bid me farewell, it is all I ask."

"Farewell, farewell," cried Aline, almost unconsciously. "God bless you," replied he; "farewell, farewell for ever!"

She heard the rustling of the branches as he rapidly forced his way through the grove, and when it was no longer audible, she leaned her head on Caribert's shoulder, and wept aloud. He, during the energetic denunciation of Claude, had been forcibly affected by the whole tenor of what was said. He felt the justice of every word—he could not interrupt his accuser—and there was something almost solemn in the heart-broken accents coming thus upon him, through the profound darkness of night, so abruptly and so resistless. He felt relieved by the departure of his injured friend—he was beginning to breathe more freely, as he heard his retiring steps—but every frenzied emotion burst out again when Aline gave way to her tears, which

he attributed at the instant to her sorrow for the absence of his now detested rival.

"What," cried he, "do you weep for him? Is it thus you judge between us? Is this your love for me?"

"For God's sake spare me any further wretchedness," sobbed she. "Would you have me savage enough to be insensible to such a scene as this? Would you wish for a proof of my love that would shew me to be unworthy of yours?"

"Forgive me, my own Aline. I am afraid only that I must appear criminal in your eyes,—but recollect how I have adored you.—All ties of friendship, I would almost say, of honour, were weak beside my passion! Tell me you don't blame, and that you love me as much as ever."

Sophistry is a most eloquent weapon, when the speaker and the hearer are in sympathy; and this being the case in the present instance, Aline was totally overcome. She returned Ca-

ribert's embrace again and again. She made him swear that he would not seek a meeting with Claude, to which his oath to his father was also an impediment; and after a thousand entreaties on her part, and assurances on his, relative to his safety on the morrow, Aline parted from him at the edge of the grove; and he, when she was safely in the house, retraced his steps through its dark paths, and then took his way towards home.

Alone on his dreary route, amidst the darkness of night, and the desolateness of nature, his mind was quickly up in all the tumult of conflicting passion. He felt degraded before himself; his pride was bent down by the weight of his own consciousness, rather than the reproaches of him he had so injured. Aline had heard the damning accusation, though she could not witness the corresponding blush on his cheek. She sympathized with his accuser—she wept for him. What might she not feel when alone, and left to the strong discrimination of her clear-

sighted understanding! This thought brought with it all the subsidiary pangs of his fierce but humbled spirit. Then again came the reflection of his unworthy conduct to Jeanneton. His deceit before her face seemed nothing: he had arguments at hand to justify that; but the meanness of his slander when she was away! That was the thought which let him down to the level of disgrace. But there was still one feeling worse than all the rest. *Twice* during the day he had been branded with the name of coward! *Twice!* and by the two persons in the world who knew his character best. Time was when not his father or his friend would have dared to breathe a similar thought. What then could prompt it now? Could his nature have been changed, and was it true? He paused as he asked himself these questions; and in the phrenzy of his agitation he found himself at the turn of the path leading to Claude's cottage. He had taken that path unconsciously, and it seemed to him as if the demon of revenge had been

guiding his steps. He started back in horror at the thought which rushed upon him. It was the strong desire of vengeance. He saw Claude pictured to his imagination in all the dignity of triumphant virtue, and he leaped foward as it were to trample him under his feet. He had no sooner conceived the thought, than he shrunk wildly from its touch, and putting his hands to his forehead, he found the cold sweat pouring down from it, while his heart felt all on fire. He turned from the path, recovered his homeward way, and soon arrived at the cottage.

The door was ajar. He entered softly, and perceived, by the light of the little lamp which glimmered in a corner, that his father was asleep, and that his mother had also lain down on the bed, tired, no doubt, by her assiduous attention to his ailment. The night was piercingly cold; and Caribert shivered in every joint. He softly stirred up the wood-ashes, and raked together the expiring faggots. He sat down by this inefficient and comfortless fire,

and patted the head of Pero, the only dog now left them, who awoke and acknowledged the friendly touch by a lazy movement of his tail. Caribert leaned his head upon the table, and sat thus for a considerable time; and must have suffered all the violent symptoms of ague and fever, for the old man who had been awakened, and lay listening for some minutes, at length started up, and called out, "Why, Marie! Caribert! what shaking is that? Who is rattling the table there? The dawn is breaking. Marie, I say! Caribert!"

His wife started up, as did the old man; but Caribert answered not. They both approached, and while she lighted a candle, the father aroused him from his heavy but fevered slumber. To the ejaculation of "What ho! Caribert, what are you shaking at? do you see a ghost in your sleep?" he replied by a bound from his seat, a vacant stare, and an exclamation of "What ghost? Whose? He is not dead yet, is he?"

As he spoke these words, he gazed wildly round him, and passed his hand hurriedly before his eyes, as if to rid himself of some horrid fancy.

"No, not yet," answered the father; "but by the blessing of Heaven, in two hours hence he shall welter in his heart's blood!"

The expression of countenance with which Caribert answered this speech made the old woman shudder. The father thought only of the bear; the wandering mind of the son had fixed itself on a different object. But he recovered himself in a moment; and seeing the bustle of preparation that his father began to make, he prepared in frenzied haste to accoutre himself for the chase.

His arrangements went on silently, and were completed before those of his father, who stopped every moment to utter expressions of anticipated vengeance on his enemy, and to scrutinize with an unnecessary minuteness every atom of his weapons, to satisfy himself that nothing might

be wanting for the approaching struggle. When Caribert was completely cased in his leathern doublet and gaiters, his belt fastened on, his knife placed in it, his strong gloves on his hands, and his pike firmly clenched within them, he appeared to both father and mother to look once more like himself; to wear the semblance of that united activity and strength which had always distinguished him. The old man contemplated him proudly, and saw nothing but the fire of valour in his rolling eyes and flushed complexion; but the mother, more experienced, and more alive to such symptoms, trembled to think that they arose from fever and a wayward mind

Every thing being completed in the way of equipment, the hunters set out, followed by their dog. But the poor animal seemed to obey unwillingly the familiar call of his old master. He looked about, and appeared to enquire of those around him for the former companion of all his hunting feats. He was

evidently dispirited, and lingered in the track of Caribert, instead of boldly springing forwards, and leading the party, as had ever been his wont until this morning. The anxious wife and mother embraced both father and son. "For Heaven's sake, Larcole," said she, "be as steady as brave to-day! Remember your lame arm in the attack; and do not expose yourself if it feels crippled."

"Never fear, Dame, never fear! I am fit for any enterprise this morning. With Caribert beside me once more, dressed in the only suit which is becoming to him in my eyes, I feel as strong as a dozen."

"God grant that all be right with him!" replied she, as she gave Caribert a parting kiss on either cheek. "How do you feel, my child? you were burning hot a moment ago, and you are now shivering again."

"O, mother, it is only from anxiety to attack old Bruin.—I am as well as ever, believe

me," said he, with an assumed gaiety.—"Now then, father, are you ready?"

"And willing, my boy," said the old man, briskly; and, waving their hands in answer to the salute of their anxious companion, they stepped forward in the direction of the Pic.

The fatal results of this eventful expedition must be taken, in some measure, upon evidence not quite positive. They have been gathered from the scarce coherent disclosures of insanity—the broken and shuddering confessions of a maniac's lucid hours—the knowledge of the actors' characters—and the probabilities of the fact. Such is the foundation on which the universal opinion is built as to the accuracy of what follows.

Soon after Caribert and his father had quitted their home, the morning, which had only just broke, began to be more than commonly overcast. A snow shower, mixed with rain, assailed them ere they reached the Pic du Midi; and

the piercing cold of the air, added to the sleet beating cuttingly into his face, brought on, with Caribert, repeated attacks of violent and alternate fever and shivering. When they arrived at the den of the bear, which was formed of a cavity in the western side of the mountain, close to that terrific precipice which I have already endeavoured to describe, they were both benumbed, and scarcely capable of exertion; but the old man, rousing up all his wrath and courage for the onset, approached the cave, and with loud shouts of defiance, endeavoured to stir up the savage animal's rage. The summons was no sooner heard than answered. A horrible growl sent out from the recess, was followed by the appearance of the bear, which rushed forth as if in conscious recollection of yesterday's triumph. At the appalling sound and sight, Pero, the faithful and courageous dog, unsupported by his former ally, and having his share of brute remembrance too, of the late rencontre, hung down his head, dropped his

tail, and fled yelping down the mountain. Old Larcole grasped his pike firmly, and advanced. The hideous monster reared itself up on its hind legs, stretched out its fore paws, and as, with its jaws yawning wide, its fearful tusks displayed, and growling with horrid energy, it was in the very act of springing forward, the veteran hunter stepped close up, and aimed a thrust with no flinching strength, right at his enemy's heart. He was not far wide of that vital spot. His pike pierced the left breast, and went out clearly at the shoulder. Rendered frantic by the pain, the bear bounded up, flung itself full upon its undaunted assailant, and fell upon him to the earth. The old man, burying his head under the body of his foe, received on the back and shoulders of his doublet its unavailing efforts to penetrate the thick folds of armour with tusks and nails. He tugged at the pike to extricate it from the body, but his position was such that he could not succeed, and every new effort only tended to give issue

to the thick stream of blood which flowed from the wound. During this frightful struggle, the yells of the bear were mixed with and smothered by the loud execrations of the old man. The latter, at length, gave up the hope of recovering his pike, but strove fairly next to get rid of his terrific burden. He succeeded so far as to get one leg clear, and with his nervous grasp, entwined round the body of the brute; he was rising on his knee, and called out, "Now, Caribert, now! To his heart—to his heart the death blow, now! strike, strike!"—but Caribert struck not! He stood gazing on the scene—panic-struck—fixed to the spot with emotions not fathomable to man,—a terrible but not solitary instance of the perilous risks run by mental courage, as well as by human virtue. I do not inquire into the mystery—but there he stood, its horrible and shuddering illustration!

The old man was now getting clear, but the bear had his hold in turn. His huge paws

were fastened with a dreadful force round one of his victim's thighs; and recovering from his sprawling posture, he began to draw him backwards, evidently in the design of regaining his den. The old man's courage rose with his danger, for he alertly drew his knife from his belt, opened the blade, and plunged it repeatedly into the body of the bear. The latter leaped and bounded with agony; and Larcole, recovering his feet once more, succeeded in grasping the savage in his arms. But the trial could not be prolonged. He was drooping under the dreadful gripe.—Breathless and faint, he could only utter some terrific curses against the recreant who had abandoned him; and while Caribert gazed, his brain on fire, his hands outstretched, his tongue cleaving to his mouth, but his limbs trembling, his heart sunk, and his feet rooted to the earth, he saw the white locks of his aged father floating over the neck of his destroyer; while the dying animal,

in his blindness, not knowing what he did, had retreated to the very edge of the precipice, slipping at every backward plunge in the slough formed by the snow and his own heart's blood, by which it was dissolved. The old man, seeing his terrible fate, seemed to acquire for an instant the gigantic energy of despair. Throwing one glance across the horrid space on the border of which he stood, he screamed in a voice of thunder, " Caribert! Caribert!" The terrible expression conveyed in this hoarse scream, struck on the mind of his son with an electrical shock. Suddenly roused from his stupor, he recovered for an instant all his recollection and his courage. He uttered a cry of corresponding fierceness,—swung his brandished pike—rushed forwards with open arms to seize his father, and snatch him from his destiny,—but it was too late! The monster touched on the extreme edge—lost his footing—plunged instinctively forward—took another backward step,—and just as Caribert believed he had

grasped his father in his outstretched arms, both man and bear were lost to his sight, and their groans came mingling in the air, as they went crashing down below.

CHAPTER VIII.

What Caribert did, or said, or felt, we must not enquire. Whether his reason took flight in silent agony, or in screaming despair, can only be a matter of conjecture, or rather, of imagination. He saw the consummation of the sacrifice; and he often afterwards recounted the scene, in fits of madness, and in passing moments of reason, and never deviated in his tale.

The person who first saw him after this dreadful hour, was she, who in light and darkness, reason or frenzy, was all and every thing to him. It cannot be known how soon, but the same morning, and probably immediately after the completion of the tragedy, he hurried to the

house of Moinard. The last expiring moment of his reason probably prompted him to fly to Aline; a consciousness of his coming madness—a desire of breathing out the last words of rational thought upon her bosom—an instinct—an inspiration—Who may divine the impulse? Be it what it might, it led him to *her*.

Aline's anxiety had totally prevented her from sleeping the preceding night, and she was up with the dawn. She would have wished to go to Claude's cottage, to have seen him and his sisters, and freely and frankly to have communicated and consulted upon their relative situations. But delicacy, with respect to him and Jeanneton immediately repressed this first suggestion of her feelings, and she was obliged to content herself with waiting till Mannette awoke, when she despatched her with a message to the eldest sister, requesting her to come down to her immediately. Her father was still in bed, and her anxiety leading her far quicker than Mannette's greatest possible speed, she walked from

the house an hour after her departure, and proceeded towards the Pine Grove, in hopes of meeting the little messenger, with her who was the object of her mission.

The interview that she expected, the confession she had to make, and all its intricacy of explanations and excuses, were sufficiently calculated to create awkwardness and embarrassment in a delicate mind. What were they in comparison to the shock which was preparing to burst on her most sensitive heart!

As she approached the grove, and within a few paces of the entrance, her eyes cast down, her arms folded, and her mind involved in deep varieties of thought, she heard the rapid approach of hurried footsteps, and looking up, she perceived the appalling figure of Caribert—dressed in all the rude and fierce habiliments of hunting warfare; his pike brandished in his hand, as she had first seen him before their fatal acquaintance,—but with a countenance ten thousand times more terrible. He was now

pale—his looks haggard—his eyes as if bursting from their sockets—every feature, every expression, giving evidence of the ravages of disease, despair, and madness.

In the first moment of her terror she turned to fly, but his voice transfixed her to the spot.

"Stay, stay, my Aline!" cried he; "stay, my bride!" She stopped and looked at him in speechless misery, for the truth of his situation darted across her brain.

"That's an unkind look of greeting," continued he. "Is not this our marriage day? I am breathless with running—You don't know me in my wedding dress!" and he here laughed in horrid confirmation of her dreadful doubts.

"O Father of mercy! save and pity him," cried she, in agony.

He took one of her hands, and perceiving her to tremble violently, he exclaimed, "What, are you afraid of me? look at me! I have not a drop of his blood upon my hands—he threw himself over—you don't suppose I murdered him!—

But he is dead—dead—dashed to pieces! save me—O! save me from his dreadful curses!"

He here seemed to feel a pang of horrid remembrance. He flung himself on his knees at Aline's feet, and hid his face in the folds of her dress. Shocked and terrified beyond all power of recollection, she screamed for help, and as she loudly called on her father, a new chord was touched in the mind of the wretched maniac.

"Father! father!" exclaimed he,—"aye, call, call loudly, but he cannot answer! O God! I have no father. I saw him fall into the chasm."

He here started on his feet, and holding her firm with one hand, he threw away his pike and leaned forward, with the other stretched open, and looked as if gazing down the frightful precipice, and striving to grasp the falling sufferer. Moinard now approached rapidly from the house, and Aline, turning once more to Caribert, added in a supplicating but half distracted tone—

"What is the dreadful meaning of your words and looks? Tell me, I conjure you, Caribert, by your affection for me, tell me what it is that has driven you to this state?"

Moinard at this moment came up, and seeing the terrified looks of Aline, and the ferocious attitude of Caribert, believed that the latter was attempting some violence upon her, he seized the pike and darted forwards, exclaiming, "Villain! would you murder her?" "He is mad, father, he is mad!" she called out, "he knows not what he does!"

Caribert, not heeding her, replied to the exclamation of Moinard "Yes, murder, murder is what I want—but oh! not her, not her!" He here took her hand and pressed it to his lips. Moinard, almost petrified with surprise and affright at the supposed danger of his child, stood motionless, while the maniac continued, "Why my own best Aline, you see your father has come to give us his blessing—kneel to him with me!" He forced her to the position,

"Now swear to be mine, and mine only in life and death—you often promised it, swear!"

"O God, O God!" uttered Aline.

"You do not swear," cried Caribert: "Moinard, make her swear it. I know they are going to drag me from her—they wait for the parricide! Swear, swear, Aline?"

"Say anything to pacify him," whispered Moinard, who was supporting Aline on the other side. "I do swear then," said she, "solemnly, most solemnly swear, never to be another's while you live! In reason or in madness, I am your's. So hear me, and so help me heaven!"

The tone of awful reality with which she pronounced these words struck upon the father's heart with a sound of shocking apprehension. He feared that the terror of the scene had affected her reason too. He raised her up; and Caribert loosening her hand, exultingly exclaimed, "She is mine, she is mine. Now do your worst against me. Seize me, kill me if

you can!" He then burst into another of those horrid laughs so common to maniacs; and by a rapid transition to the cause of his estrangement he added furiously—" 'Tis false, I did not hurl him over.—Pero ran and I stood still, but the bear alone dragged him down. I saw it—yet I stood still! Oh coward! coward! coward!" He here struck his clenched fist against his forehead with terrible violence; and as if all at once losing every recollection but of the harrowing event, he turned his steps away and fled howling up the mountain. Moinard's heart seemed frozen with horror, and when at length he looked at his daughter's face, he found she had fainted in his arms.

I must leave my readers to imagine much of the substance of what followed this scene: the daughter's confession of her secret intercourse and strong attachment, the father's attempted reproaches and involuntary forgiveness—the measures taken on all hands for the discovery of the manner and cause of old Larcole's dreadful

death, and the steps pursued for the security and recovery of his unfortunate son.

The wretchedness of Aline was considerably heightened by the intelligence brought to her by Mannette. It appeared that Claude, on his return home the preceding night, had communicated to his anxious sisters the whole circumstances of his discovery, Caribert's perfidy, and (as they would have it) the deceitfulness of Aline. They could not conceal from themselves or deny to Claude, that she had never shewn him the least encouragement, nor that she had almost wholly given up her intercourse with them, as it was now evident for the purpose of avoiding him; and that, in fact, no blame could attach to her from having given way to the impulses of her heart, when they were unopposed by any obstacles of delicacy or positive duty. But still their deep mortification at the double disgrace which had fallen on the family, determined them, in spite of their own reason and his remonstrances, to renounce their friendship

for one whom, had they known all that was about to happen, they would have acknowledged to need their compassion as much as she merited their regard.

But the contest between their hearts and their pride, both equally wounded, was soon forgotten in the contemplation of the loss they were about to suffer. Claude had determined to abandon the country, and never to pass a day in the scene of his past hope and present misery. He at once decided to sell his little property, and remove to some distant district of his native mountains, for his affection to the Pyrenees was not injured by his own unhappiness. Kind and yielding as his disposition was in general, he could, as we have already seen, be firm when the case required it. This was an occasion that called for an exertion of all his latent energies. Resisting the tears, the entreaties, the reproaches of those sisters whom he loved so tenderly, he announced to them his unshaken resolution, and passed the night in preparations for his

voluntary exile. He made all the arrangements requisite for their guidance while he was to be separated from them. He recommended his sisters to each other's care, for in those wild and pastoral districts, they wanted no other protection; and having furnished himself with a small supply of money, he took his leave of them with the dawn, and proceeded to the Mairie of the Commune, to secure his passport, and consult with the rustic magistrate, on the best steps to be taken for the disposal of the old and the acquirement of another residence.

He was gone when Mannette reached the cottage, and the only return she received for Aline's friendly message, was an account of his departure, and a volley of reproaches, which she comprehended as little as her sister deserved them.

Moinard took the promptest means of informing the authorities of the dreadful catastrophe which he suspected from the incoherent phrases of Caribert. The whole commune was quickly

in motion; and the several inhabitants performed their various offices, consistent with their different characters, of consoling the widow, seeking the dead body, making inquisitive researches at the cottages of Madame Larcole, Claude and Moinard, securing the maniac, disseminating the true intelligence, or fabricating false.

The ferment of horror and regret excited throughout the neighbourhood was proportioned to the shocking nature of the events, and the consideration enjoyed by the unfortunate sufferers, dead and living. The wide-spread feeling was compassion. As soon as the sorrowful details of the morning had acquired some consistency, there was scarcely a heart that did not throb with pity for the maniac, his widowed mother, and desolate mistress. Even the sisters of Claude, who saw in the involuntary suggestions of superstitious vengeance only a just visitation on the chief actor, even they could not withhold their commiseration from the innocent

partner of his misery. They were among the first to fly to Aline and offer their condolements, and she felt a satisfaction quite apart from anything like triumph, in listening to the ardent and innocent expressions of sympathy, which poured with unbroken fluency from the artless Jeanneton.

In this season of universal kindness, there was however, one malignant spirit abroad, and did I wish to present a painful picture of evil, I could make this wretch a prominent character here. I prefer leaving him in the shade; merely stating that he was one of those base-minded, envious companions who hated Caribert for his superiority, and now in his utter ruin came forth to blacken his character by the foulest insinuations. He spread the report, founded only on his own pretended belief, that Caribert had been the murderer of his father; that in a moment of fierce altercation he had thrown him from the precipice, together with the body of the bear they had killed; and that his apparent frenzy

was assumed in order to screen himself from suspicion and punishment.

Monstrous as this story was, it gained a momentary belief; and the absence of Caribert, who had fled in his delirium far into the mountain fastnesses, seemed to give weight to the calumny. He was accordingly pursued, not from the charitable feeling due to a wandering wretch, but with the vengeful ardour of injured justice, ready to crush a detested criminal.

After a day and night spent in the search, he was at last overtaken by the officers of the law, seized, and conveyed a prisoner to the chief place of the district. He was suffering from all the violence of a dreadful crisis; and so clear were the evidences of insanity, so little shadow of reason appeared to justify the odious imputation, and so strong a proof of the truth was apparent in the position of the dead and mangled body, (which was found at the bottom of the chasm locked in the death-grasp of its

hideous destroyer) that the prayers of the wretched widow, added to those of the afflicted Aline, and a numerous crowd of applicants, were granted by the authorities; and the wretched sufferer was safely conducted to the paternal cottage, and given up to the natural attentions of his mother. In all her cares she was assisted by the undaunted and indefatigable Aline, who vowed herself to his service, and never shrunk one moment from the duty. They nursed him together in his worst paroxysms, aided by the voluntary cares of the neighbouring men, when force was necessary, and under the guidance of such medical advice as the village doctors were able to bestow.

The unsubdued strength of Caribert's constitution brought him through this trial for his life. He arose from his bed a confirmed maniac, but still vigorous in bodily health. He was watched with minute assiduity, but he never attempted the slightest violence against himself or others. When Aline was in his pre-

sence he was as tame as the dog that crouched beside his chair, unconscious of the part it bore in the abandonment which drove its master mad. When he missed his idol from the chamber, he still continued to address her in wild but ardent language, as if his visionary notions had always figured her before him. But sometimes during her absence, he used to turn from the main subject of his wanderings, and recur with shuddering and horror to that of his father's death. A wild scream, an execration of his own cowardice, or an abrupt and energetic expression suited to such a desperate conflict as had cost the old man his life, was the forerunner of these excesses of fury. But the moment that Aline returned, called in by the attendants, or herself on the watch for these dreaded sounds, the patient sunk at once into a state of innocent and even childish subjection.

These symptoms related to the days immediately succeeding his misfortune. In a fortnight's time he was wonderfully recovered in

health; he was able to go out; and so little apprehension did he excite, that in another week they allowed him to wander alone (his greatest delight) from cottage to cottage, gathering bouquets of wild flowers to present to the neighbours. They received him with deep pity; and even the little children, to whom he was never an object of endearment in his years of reason, used now in his hours of insanity to hail his presence with pleasure, and play with him without fear.

On these occasions he was always carefully attended. Some of the youths were ever on the watch. But whoever might volunteer the duty, whether performed as a task or a pleasure by the kind neighbours, there was one who for many days accompanied his steps at a cautious distance, watching his harmless ramblings, and ever ready to come closer should he wander into danger. That one was Aline.

The contrast between the strong feelings of this admirable girl and the inferiority of Jean-

neton was never so conspicuous as now. The latter, far from following the arduous example of Aline, shrunk with terror from the slightest approach of the object to whom she had fancied herself tenderly attached. It was not that she experienced any of her first sensations of indignant shame for his deceit, or any want of feeling for his situation, but merely that a constitutional weakness of mind made her tremble at the possible contact with madness. Every one was astonished to observe how slight was the force of her former passion, in comparison with her foolish fears; and Aline could not avoid a sort of satisfied and almost exculpatory feeling for the offender, when she saw how little capable of powerful sentiment was the object of his injustice, and when she reflected that he did the wrong for *her* sake.

Moinard, whose ruling feelings were the love of money mixed with a strong affection for his daughter, seemed on this occasion to forget all the first, in his more marked indulgence of the

latter. Aline possessed as much of his respect as his love, and had that complete ascendency over him in all things, which we sometimes (but rarely) see parents generous and wise enough to concede to children superior to them by nature. He yielded to every suggestion of Aline, which had for its object the amelioration of Caribert's afflicting malady. As far as his means went there was no comfort requisite for the maniac that he did not amply provide; and, a still greater proof of his submission to Aline, he never opposed her attendance upon him. On the contrary he frequently shared it with her. In these moments of extraordinary fellowship, both father and daughter had many serious debates on the subject dearest to both their hearts; and the compact usually entered into between them was—that her father should never in the slightest degree attempt to dissuade her from the duty to which she had devoted herself, that he never should urge her to marry any

man while Caribert lived; and she for her part pledged herself by solemn promises equivalent to oaths, that even should he recover his reason, she would never, under any inducement or circumstance, become his wife.

To this last condition in their agreement, pressed with all the force of a prudent and fond parent's energy, her own good sense induced a prompt and unequivocal compliance. She saw clearly that even in a state of perfect recovery, the shock received by his mind must always leave it debilitated, and that his impetuous feelings would be ever on the brink of a relapse; and she shuddered at the idea of an union with one, who had in a crisis so terrible, been the cause, from whatever accident of feeling, of so horrid a death to his parent.

Thus then the melancholy prospect before her was, in the event of Caribert's recovery, a life of mournful celibacy; in case of his protracted insanity, a harassing and miserable at-

tendance upon him. The latter she fulfilled with a dreary gratification—the former probable sacrifice she looked forward to with ardent hope. His death, which could alone free her from all her engagements, never came in idea to her mind that her heart did not sink within her. But that possible event, to her so shocking, was to Moinard the strong hope that bore him up under all his sorrows. He calculated in the first instance on the violence of the attack carrying Caribert fairly off; and when he observed him to gain strength, he hoped for a relapse. The visits he paid him were for the observation of his malady, rather than its alleviation; and while he indulged Aline in all her demands on account of her lost lover, it was to preserve appearances, and conceal from her his real wishes, which he well knew would be shocking in the extreme to her. Moinard's heart was stern, and even hard, in all the relations of life, except those in which he stood towards Aline. His only point of feeling was for her. He encouraged the permis-

sion freely given to Caribert to ramble about. He thought it very likely that some event might cross him in his wanderings that would give a more violent turn to his subdued sensations—and he did not argue amiss.

A chance view, one evening, of two of the hunters returning from the chase, with the skin of a bèar, the spoils of the day, suddenly opened a new channel in the wayward feelings of the maniac. The whole memory of his former life seemed to burst at once through the darkness of his mind. He started up, bounded forward, hallooed wildly, "To the chase, father! come, come!" and from that moment he was fully impressed with the notion that the ghost of his hapless parent was continually following him with menacing attitudes and upbraiding looks; and to fly from these reproaches he hurried along, using such expressions as might prove his ardour in the pursuit to which he fancied the spectre was urging him.

This abrupt transition from a state of languid

apathy was, nevertheless, unattended by any disposition to outrage. The only danger to be apprehended was that which might befal himself. His steps constantly pointed towards the Tourmalet, that near neighbourhood of the fatal scene; and it was feared that if ever he succeeded in reaching the horrid precipice alone, he might in a paroxysm of frenzy hurl himself into the chasm. The cares of his guardians were therefore encreased tenfold, and were not sparingly partaken by her who might be called without much exaggeration, an angel among them.

In one of the wonderful varieties of his disorder, some days after this unfortunate change, he suddenly became better, and for a few hours seemed to have actually recovered his reason. The doctor accounted for this by various theories, too deep for the understanding of his hearers; but the old women attributed it entirely to the influence of a new moon. However the point might be, the momentary hope was soon dispelled. The rational discourse held

by the patient during his lucid interval, his ample recognition of the persons surrounding him, his feeling of the truth of his own situation, all quickly vanished in the sudden relapse which took place almost immediately. This effort at recovery seemed to plunge his mind still deeper into the abyss, as each fresh struggle of a drowning man, by weakening his powers, but sinks him in exhaustion.

He no longer knew those who were near him. Even Aline had lost her hold upon his memory; and events, as well as persons, seemed utterly effaced from it. He talked in wild and wandering strains of objects and of beings whom he had never seen, grew confused in all his conceptions of the things before him; and seemed totally to forget all connection between the present and the past.

He still rambled about, and was still attended by Aline. She now scarcely quitted the cottage of his mother, except to follow his steps; or at night, when he was closely guarded by some

one or other of his neighbours and former fellow hunters, who now forgot all their previous jealousies, and vied in their alacrity on this charitable duty.

CHAPTER IX.

Between five and six weeks had thus rolled heavily over, each succeeding hour bearing some new load of care to those immediately concerned in the fate of my unfortunate hero. The snows melted away on the mountain tops; the ripening spring began to spread its green and flower besprinkled carpet on the plains; the flocks exchanged the dreary imprisonment of their wintry sheds for the highland pasturage, where the odorous herbage wooed them by its fragrance; and the shepherds resumed their annual tenantry of the loose-built hovels, through which the summer airs sported almost as unobstructedly as on the naked hills around them. But while nature

seemed revelling in enjoyment, the dark night of madness, and the sombre twilight of grief had set their seal upon the two minds the most fitted of all within their circle, to indulge in the luxuriant charms of the opening year.

There was one more too, who, though distant from the scene, was not out of the influence of these distresses. Claude, when he left his home, had made a parting request of his sisters, that they would not attempt to follow his track, or strive to interrupt his purpose. To ensure their acquiescence, and to give him every fair chance of shaking off the memory of his afflictions, he made it a point that they were not to attempt any communication by letter, except in the case of some illness amongst them. He faithfully promised to let them hear from him frequently; and trusting the best for their health and happiness, (for he had no dread for the elastic mind of Jeanneton) he hoped that an utter absence from all his late associations would root them out effectually from his mind.

As the weeks passed over his lone and melancholy career, he found that he was mistaken. It was in vain that he sought relief in the various novelties on his way. He traced the winding course of the Garonne from the mountains to the plains; he walked the banks of the canal of Languedoc, wandered through the streets of Toulouse, the first large town he had ever seen; stood upon the shores of the Mediterranean, marvelled at the sight of ships and billows, and gazed astonished at the deep blue sky, reflected in the loveliest of moving mirrors. He saw wonders in the charms of nature, and miracles in the works of art, but he had no true enjoyment or heartfelt sympathy in aught of these; for the cold discourse of strangers checked every warm emotion, and threw him upon the memory of darker days, as the strand which flings back an abandoned bark upon the chill bosom of the waves that wrecked it. He wrote constantly to his sisters, but all at second hand. Claude, like his former associates, was no scholar, and in

these cases he was forced to have recourse to those dexterous bunglers who abound in every town in France—those "public writers," who in their stunted little wooden hovels, melting in the summer heat, or suffocating by their winter's stove, ply so flourishing a trade at the cost of their illiterate brethren, and mar with their vile rhetoric, with "taffeta phrase and silken terms precise," the plain and honest expression of their unsophisticated employers. The paper was always filled by the dictation of Claude, and sullied by the style of the amanuensis. Not a spot was left unoccupied —the full heart seemed ever in want of space to deposit its overflowings, but not one syllable was ever to be seen—not one name recorded—not one sentiment expressed, of all that caused the heart's repletion. This forced reserve, this abstinence from what had been till now the vital nourishment of Claude's existence, was too unnatural to be persevered in. He ever felt the

gnawing desire to speak of Aline. He thought of her, of nothing but her, in despite of time, of distance, and novelties, and resolutions. He made a thousand efforts to deceive himself. He seriously strove to persuade himself that his anxiety to return home was all on his sisters' account. He muttered to his conscience some warm expostulations about duty and affection, and the like; but his conscience always retorted by the utterance of a simple name—that name which he adored as deeply and silently as the word which the devout Hebrew holds buried in his heart's recesses.

He had done nothing yet towards the accomplishment of his journey's ostensible purpose. In quitting the hills, he had insensibly taken a course foreign to his first design, and the more he saw of civilization and society, the more he was convinced it was unfit for the adoption of a mountaineer. He resolved, then, to take to the Pyrenees once more; and felt his heart lighter,

he knew not why, as he mounted their rugged sides, and inhaled the freshening breeze that seemed to welcome him.

As he tracked his way towards home, he examined minutely every place that might be likely to suit his views; but a thousand frivolous objections were involuntarily starting up, when anything struck him as peculiarly adapted to them. He seemed plagued with a perversity of opposition to the very object he sought for The fact was, his inclinations were not in tune with his projects, for while his eyes explored each new habitation, his head was fixed on the old one—and there never existed a speculation, planned by however wise a head, which might not be baffled by one feeling of the heart. In this case, at all events, Claude's plans went all for nothing: and he found himself, at length, after a journey of many a weary league, within a day's march of home; without having taken one step towards the design which was to remove him from it for ever.

The anxiety which had accompanied him on his expedition, encreased tenfold as the latter was about to terminate. As he approached the sphere of his former acquaintance, he seemed to shrink into himself, for fear of meeting any one to whom he had been known before. He dreaded the announcement of that intelligence which alone he expected, and felt that the voice which should first proclaim to him the marriage of Aline and Caribert would sound like a death-knell in his ears. In avoiding an encounter with the dreaded reality, he kept, for his last day's march, high above the inhabited districts, and wandered in paths peopled only by the phantoms which his apprehensions conjured up.

When he at length got within sight of his cottage, and gazed with full eyes and a beating heart, far off beyond it, in the involuntary but vain desire of catching a glimpse of another, concealed from him by the unequal soil, the sun was sinking in a sea of haze, made radiant by his parting beams. Claude's shadow as he stood

on the edge of Mount Arbizon, stretched far down the mountain, an emblem of his vague and exaggerated alarms, and seemed like them to hurry with gigantic movements towards the spot that contained their unconscious author. It was almost dark before he could summon resolution sufficient to descend into the inhabited valley and approach his own door; and he did so with great precaution not to meet any one in his path.

His gentle tap at the door was answered by a friendly " Come in," from the voice of Jeanneton. Fearful of alarming her by an abrupt entrance, he hesitated a moment, when she added in a more pressing tone, " Come in, Simon, are you afraid ?"

" I am not Simon, my dear Jeanneton, and only afraid of frightening you," replied he, stepping into the kitchen, and meeting her as she advanced to open the door for her expected visitant.

"Claude!" cried she, throwing her arms round his neck; "my dear, dear brother!"

At this sound, Aimée, the youngest of the sisters, ran out from the inner room, where she had been preparing for her early bed; and she joined her embraces and welcomes to those of Jeanneton.

"But my dear Jeanneton," said Claude, after they had all given vent to their joy at this meeting, "you did not expect me. What Simon was it for whom you were running to open the door?"

"Oh! nobody," replied she, blushing, "but Simon Guilloteaux of Bastan, who has stepped in now and then of an evening since you left us."

"It seems that he's a welcome visitor, Jeanneton."

"Not a thousandth part as welcome as you, my dear brother," returned she, again and again embracing him.

"But Catrine," asked Claude, "where is she?"

"Gone to Sarancolin," replied Aimée; "you know this is letter day at the post office, and as we had none from you the last two letter days, we made sure of one this time."

"Poor Catrine!" exclaimed Claude, "she will be again disappointed." "Ah, but when she comes back and finds you here, instead of a letter!" said Aimée.

"Why that will certainly be better," replied Claude. "You were waiting up for Catrine, dear Jeanneton?" added he.

"For her?" uttered Jeanneton, confusedly—"why—no—yes,—oh yes, I was expecting her."

All remark from the questioner was stopped by Aimée's crying out that she saw sister Catrine coming up the path, close to the house. To surprise her the more, both the girls insisted on Claude's concealing himself in the closet; and just as Jeanneton closed the door, she

whispered in his ear, "Dear Claude, you need not say any thing to Catrine about Simon Guilloteaux; I'll tell you all by and by!"

Poor Catrine, chagrined and fatigued, more by her disappointment than her journey, came in out of heart, and out of temper. She sat down, exclaiming that she had no letter, and that she was sure Claude was dangerously ill or dead. The peevish way in which this was uttered, was not quite like the tone of conviction which announces our belief in a calamity; and when she saw the little effect it produced on her sisters, Catrine's anger was more evident than her grief.

"You are both very unfeeling," said she reproachfully. "I am astonished at you, Aimée; as for Jeanneton, I dare say she forgets dear Claude, as easily as she has poor Caribert, since she has taken up with that good-for-nothing fellow, Guilloteaux."

At these words Jeanneton looked anxiously towards the closet door, fearful of Claude's

overhearing the accusation of levity so fiercely pronounced against her.

Catrine, in her sharp way, saw the glance, and the confusion of her sister, and bounced up briskly, exclaiming—"I'll lay my new hood to an eagle's feather, you have got the fellow hid in the closet! Let me in, Simon," cried she, pulling at the key. "Let me in, I say, or I'll break open the door. Let me in, let me in!"

Claude knowing her temper, flung the door open, and received her in his arms. Her heart, full as warm as her head was hot, bounded with astonished delight. She embraced her brother, then Jeanneton and Aimée, then Claude once more; and laughed and cried alternately for several minutes.

This whole scene was the greatest possible relief to poor Claude. An immense weight seemed removed from his breast. He felt the atmosphere of home penetrate to his heart; he wiped his full eyes without restraint; and sighed out manfully without fear of being sneer-

ed at. He sat down with all the sisters hanging about him, and for the first few minutes was not quite sure whether he was happy or miserable. But he soon sank into the old train of thought, and began beating about the bush to come at the news, without venturing to ask a plain question, or mention any name directly. He was in momentary expectation of Aline's being pronounced; and was marvelling much, what could have made Catrine in her reproach to Jeanneton prefer the epithet "poor" to the name of the detested Caribert—that double-faced epithet which, in its actual palpable sense, is nine times out of ten a title of contempt; but in its figurative meaning always a type of compassion. Its application in the present case could be only in the latter way; and it was a riddle not to be read by Claude's unassisted conjectures. While he was puzzling himself how to come at its meaning, the explanation burst upon him, in a manner at once shocking, and almost incredible to him.

" Dearest Claude," said Catrine, " you are then indeed returned to stay with us for ever?"

" With you for ever, dear Catrine, but not *here*."

" Surely you do not persist in abandoning our old house?" said Aimée. " I do indeed, sister," sighed Claude.

" No, no," cried Catrine, in a gayer tone; " when you know every thing you will not say so."

" Know every thing—what can you mean?" asked Claude, rising, and his heart jumping, as he thought, to his throat.

" Tell us first all you have heard of us and your old friends, since you left home," said Catrine.

" Heard!—Nothing—not one word, good or bad."

" What! not heard that Caribert"—she was here interrupted by a piercing scream from Jeanneton, who had been nearest the door, and was looking half at her brother, and half out in-

to the twilight. She threw herself upon his breast, crying "Save me, Claude!"—and while she entwined one arm round his neck, she made a violent effort to shut the door with the other. Claude still supporting her, tore it back upon its hinges, in the natural impulse that prompted him to face the danger, whatever it might be.

Straight before him, not ten paces distant, vacantly gazing at the group within the cottage, with hollow eyes and listless smile, stood Caribert. His attitude and face were speaking evidences of a host of sufferings. The languid inertness of his form, and the marble coldness of his looks, struck Claude as perfectly shocking. At the first glance his heart's blood mounted high. When he gazed a moment it seemed to curdle in his veins.

The hurried confusion and almost unintelligible explanations which burst from the three sisters together, left Claude bewildered and amazed. He could not comprehend the mystery, and seemed to have lost the sense of hearing.

The figure before him moved away, and was followed at a short interval by another, which appeared to him the conjuration of magical deception. It was that of Aline, wrapped in her hood, kindly waving her hand, and sadly smiling, as she half distinguished the cottage inhabitants through the twilight. Claude doubted the reality of every thing around him, and sat down in a chair to recover his scattered thoughts.

All his efforts to comprehend his sisters were exerted to meet their endeavours to explain, and he soon began really to understand the main features of their harrowing story. He had no time for reflection, and seemed capable at the moment of but one strong sensation—that of overwhelming horror at Caribert's loss of reason. When he rightly understood the purpose of Aline's continued devotion to the duty she had undertaken, he swore that he too would devote himself to the sacred charge, and full of the enthusiasm excited by such a cause, he flew

from the cottage and followed the steps of Aline. Her astonishment at seeing him by her side, may perhaps be imagined. She had taken him, in her imperfect passing glance, for the new lover who had succeeded the unfortunate Caribert in Jeanneton's favour. She received him with all the warmth of friendship founded on esteem; his appearance was a solace unhoped for and powerful; and as they slowly tracked together the homeward steps of the maniac, she related the details of what had passed; and he drew, from the affliction they created, full stores of hope that he was afraid to acknowledge to himself, much less breathe to her.

From that night till the one on which I met them, these admirable associates pursued the task they had voluntarily undertaken. In all the changes of their hapless patient (and he had had many, from sullen apathy to dangerous excess) they watched and followed him with unabating care. He had during this time one other short gleam of reason. It was but flitting, and

seemed to leave him but more confirmedly lost; and the encreasing violence which succeeded his relapse had only subsided, a few days before, into that treacherous calm, so like recovery as to deceive the sagacity of the doctors, and the hopes—Shall I still call them so? Yes!—the hopes of Aline, and the expectations of Claude.

During all this time, Claude never ventured to speak of love. There was no convention between him and Aline to lead to this forbearance. The subject of his passion was never mentioned. He tacitly loved on, but when he was with her it seemed to him as if it was not love that led him to her presence. He fancied that he looked on her as something beyond his reach; and that the solemn service which they performed together, opposed a kind of religious bar to the indulgence of such notions. It was when he was away from her that he knew himself rightly, and found that mixed with all the purity of his attentions to Caribert, was the passionate attachment—that rock on which their friendship and their happiness had split.

Of the results to be expected, Claude had but vague and most unfixed notions. He was so much afraid of the subject, that he never essayed to put his feelings or his thoughts in train, but went on, thankful for the blessing of being near Aline, and shuddering at each new turn of Caribert's disorder, whether it indicated a chance of his recovery or the probability of his death.

Moinard, with his eye steadily fixed on the main point of his desires, the marriage of Aline with Claude, gave every possible chance to the latter for establishing himself in her affection as firmly as he was fixed in her regard; and scrupulously acceded to every wish of his daughter connected with her attendance on Caribert. He meanwhile prayed fervently to all the saints within the limited scope of his religious knowledge, for the death of the maniac, which alone could lead to a chance of his object being accomplished.

Jeanneton continued very merrily her flirtation with Simon: thought him an excellent

substitute for Caribert; and gave but little attention to the more serious proceedings of her neighbours.

Having thus brought matters down to the state in which I first introduced this story to my readers, I shall now give up my character as a second-hand relater of other people's narrative, and resume, in a new chapter, the account of what came fairly under my own observation.

CHAPTER X.

As Moinard, Claude, Ranger, and myself arrived at the foot of the mountain, on the summit of which, it will be recollected, we were stationed at the close of Chapter IV., the full beauty of a splendid summer morning was displayed before us. The mists had all left the plains and settled high on the mountain tops, except here and there a gauze-like remnant, skimming transparently across their sides, like a solitary ghost that had outstaid the hour of its earthly visiting. The clouds which we now left high above us, opened in many places a downward passage for the sun-beams, which spread far and wide across the country, lit up the snow-covered

peaks with encreased brightness, threw gayer tints upon the dark green of the pine-forests, and flung their broad and golden streaks upon the embrowned herbage of the soil.

We traversed the plain in the direction of the Pic du Midi, which elevated its proud head in isolated majesty, and stood out far in front of the interminable chain of hills, as a giant-commander before the line of his wide stretched legions. We began the ascent on the eastern side, keeping in the direction of Lake Escoubous to the left, and intending, if we should not succeed in discovering Caribert about its borders, to mount towards the precipice, and cut into the path that terminates the road from Grippe.

Just as we began to wind up the hill, a herd of about a couple of dozen izards swept abruptly round its southern elbow, and rushed at the top of their speed down towards the plain. Their beauty of form and colour might be given by a skilful painter; but what pencil could con-

vey a notion of their inimitable grace, their agility and speed, as they darted along the levels, sprang across the huge masses of granite, and cleared at a bound the rivulets which flowed across their way! Moinard and Claude added to their alarm by loud shouts, which echoed in a hundred reverberations from the hills, and threw into equal confusion the numerous eagles which hovered slowly about the summits, as if to guard the desolation below.

A few paces more gave us an extended view towards the south, of several leagues of the valleys between us and the principal chain of hills. The plains were for the most part bleak and barren, but were dotted by occasional scraps of wood and bramble. In one of these an izard hunter was ranging with his two dogs. He carried a staff in his hands, by the assistance of which he sprang across every obstruction He was bare-headed; his gun was slung at his back; his jacket open: sandals on his feet, and a bugle-horn hanging at one side. When the

dogs took too wide a range he recalled them by winding his horn, and they (much no doubt to the annoyance of Ranger's well-formed habits) answered by yells, almost as much in tune as the mountain echoes which gave back the bugle's sounds. While I observed the picturesque scenery thus presented to me, an unlucky izard started from his bed among the shrubs, the dogs pursued, the hunter levelled his gun—but as I have already thrown the whole scene into some twenty or thirty lines of description, I may as well transcribe them here to fill up a page or so—

THE IZARD HUNTER.

Light o'er the lea the hunter bounds,
With buoyant heart and brow unclouded—
Shrill answer to his bugle's sounds
The hill, with its peak in thick mists shrouded,
And the baying of the hounds.
He quickly clears the deep ravine,
Treads with firm foot the blue-flowered heath;
But leaps those spots of treacherous green
Which hide the shaking moss beneath,
Like life's allurements veiling death.

Borne on his sharp-spiked staff he springs,
While the dogs thro' the brambly scrubwood rushing,
Fleetly lap the rock stream gushing;
And eager snuff the quarry's trace,
And yelp the music of the chase—
And keenly search as their master sings,
And his lowland cares to the rough breeze flings.
The game is up, and away he goes!
The izard springs from his leafy lair—
Cleaves, with a panting plunge, the air—
A moment breathes, and backward throws
One glance at the yelling foes.
An eagle from her crag-formed nest,
Spies the brief chase, and onwards soaring,
Flaps her way o'er the mountain's breast,
And fancies food for the hungry nest.
She marks from her height the fusil's flash,
The death-struck izard tumbles down,
And blood-drops blush on the rock-weeds brown.
Straightway she stoops with rapid dash—
But the hunter's stern fixed glances fearing,
In gloomy grandeur upwards steering,
Sweeps slowly through heaven's solitude,
To hover again o'er her screaming brood.

"Ah! there goes Louis Lizier!"—exclaimed Claude, as we first got a view of the hunter. "Woe betide the animal at which he levels his rifle!" "I knew it," added he, as the izard fell mortally wounded, "he never missed his mark."

"He must be a sure shot, to hit an izard at full speed," said I.

"Aye, that he is; and the flash of his gun is not a surer forerunner of death, than he is of the hunters. We shall have the whole body of them presently. Louis always goes out scout, to mark the prey and pick down the stragglers from the izard herds. He is a keen sportsman and fond of venison. Hark! I hear the cry of the *Battue*. Come on quickly, Sir,—we shall see them down in the wood from yonder point."

I pressed forward accompanied by Moniard, who though no sportsman by profession had sometimes followed the chase, and seemed in the animation of the present scene to have forgotten entirely the business that brought him with us across the hills. When we reached the spot

mentioned by Claude, a new gorge was opened to us, stretching to the right, thickly covered with wood, rising to the westward with a gently-sloping mountain, and bounded on the east by the frightful wall of that precipice, many hundred feet high, down which old Larcole had been plunged. When I looked upwards and marked the edge over which I had hung the morning before, and then cast my eyes down into the rocky bottom, where the old hunter had lain dead with his fierce and shaggy foe, I forgot for an instant, in the shock caused by the view, the more immediate objects of my curiosity.

My attention was however quickly recalled, by the loud shouts which issued from the wood below, the blowing of horns, the barking of dogs, and the report of musket shots. From the smoke which rose up through the pine trees after each discharge, I could ascertain that the party which was scouring the wood advanced in a tolerably regular line, and in the direction of the spot on which we stood. Moinard threw

himself carelessly down and gazed upon the scene. Ranger bounded, wagged his tail, and addressed many supplicating looks to me, enquiring the meaning of this barbarous proceeding. Claude loosened his gun from its sling, grasped it in his hands, and looked with a piercing glance, as if watching for his prey. I drew out the charges of shot with which I had loaded on starting from Moinard's house, and threw a ball into each barrel, with somewhat of the compunctious visitings which I always felt in putting my trusty and well-beloved Joe Manton to such unfair and unworthy trials. But in traversing the mountains, my principal game was to be brought down with ball;—and the confession of my remorse is, after all, only comprehensible to my English brother sportsmen, who will I trust pardon the offence against *home* practices.

The rapid advance of the hunters was made evident by those telegraphic announcements sent up through the trees—noisy reports ending in smoke, and to which I have since known many

parallels in news from very nearly the same neighbourhood. In a few minutes three or four hares bounded out of the wood and fled across the plains in defiance of the pursuit of the izard hunters' dogs. Presently two bears emerged from their concealment, and were soon followed by a third, with a wolf who sought like them a refuge from the approaching foes. All these fugitive savages made, by a common instinct, towards a rocky hollow about three hundred yards in front of the wood, and close to the foot of the mountain towards which we were gradually inclining.

Lizier, who recognized Claude, hallooed out to us to descend still faster, to hem in the enemy and prevent the possibility of his escape. The wolf trotted on briskly from the wood, and soon crouched down in the concealment of the brambles and high fern that grew among the rocks. The bears advanced to the hollow with ferocious growlings and steady gravity of pace, that marked them insensible, or indifferent to danger.

The dogs and hunters now began to appear. The former to the amount of about twenty, shewed their good training by stopping on the verge of the wood. They all lay down or stood still, and many of them rolled in the heath, refreshing themselves after their fatigue, and gaining fresh vigour for the coming contest.

The hunters all paused as they came out, and seemed to pay implicit obedience to the movements of a young man who soon appeared about the centre of the line, and who was distinguished from his comrades by a red scarf tied across his shoulder, and a small flag of the same colour, which he waved in various motions suited to the commands he meant to convey.

"Ha! ha!" said Claude, "I see they have chosen Simon Guilloteaux captain of the day. I hope he may have good sport."

"I trust he may," replied I, "for your sister's sake. There is some profit in being leader of a successful party, isn't there?"

"Why, yes, Sir; there's a whole skin to

himself, if they kill an odd number of bears, and a *petit ecu* for every wolf, besides his share of the profits coming from the commune."

"Oh, then we must do our best to help the cause—it will all be for Jeanneton's benefit you know."

"Not a bit of it, Sir,—Simon is too much of a rake not to spend every franc he gains in one foolish way or other;—but he's a good hearted lad for all that, and marriage will settle them both one day, for she's to the full as unsteady as he."

The hunters had now fairly emerged from the wood. I counted them, fourteen; and there was something irregularly martial and fiercely picturesque in their whole appearance and manner. They looked, every one, as if they had been or ought to have been soldiers. There was an air of rude uniformity in their leathern doublets, that gave a notion of discipline, and something extremely inspiring in their ardent

gestures and bold attitudes. About half a dozen carried fusils; the rest were armed with short pikes, and the accessories formerly mentioned in my description of the accoutrements of the unfortunate Larcole, and his still more ill-fated son.

Lizier and Claude soon informed the party of the good sport they had driven before them. They seemed all highly exhilarated by the intelligence, and quickly prepared for the attack. The Captain divided his party, moving towards the left with six, and ordering the others to advance straight forward, that they might commence the onset at two sides of the hollow; Claude, Lizier, and myself, being already on the rising ground opposite the wood, up which they did not think of the prey attempting to escape; while an opening was clearly left to the southward to facilitate their flight, and leave a space for the gunsmen to fire without danger to the party.

The dogs stooped down and crept onwards,

as their masters silently advanced; and when the approaching footsteps sounded within hearing of the wolf, I saw the ruffian throw his ears back, lay his head close to the earth, and show all the cunning air and posture of a fox, but none of the ferocity of his kind. The bears huddled together into the centre of the hollow; and there was something extremely ludicrous in the air of profound consultation of this heavy-headed junta, and the associations it brought to my mind, of ministers, monarchs, and the Lord knows what.

Arrived at the edges of the hollow, the huntsmen set up a loud cry to rouse the bears into fury, and force them to quit their vantage ground among the broken rocks and shrubs. The bears growled, and foamed, and moved round briskly in evident irritation, but they did not stir from their position. The wolf rose up, and as he made himself seen was assailed by fierce shouts. Three of the dogs were let loose upon him, and he immediately advanced

towards the open space. He looked round about him at the levelled guns and determined looks of his adversaries; and then, whether from chance or calculation I do not pretend to decide, he made a sudden rush to the leftward, bounded from the hollow, sprang up the hill, and took full speed towards us. Two ineffectual shots were fired at him from the opposite side, and the bullets whizzed close to us. No more could be fired from that quarter without exposing us to great risk, and a waving downward of the Captain's flag prohibited the attempt.

"Now, Lizier, now! give it to him, give it to him!" was the cry from every voice. Lizier who stood about 100 yards below us, obeyed the call, took a steady aim, fired, and missed him. Claude, burning with anxiety to outdo this celebrated marksman, levelled his gun, and struck a hundred fragments from a block of granite, over which the fugitive made a bound at the instant he pulled the trigger. It re-

mained for me to try my hand, and I certainly had fair play. Both Lizier and Claude had fired at the runaway obliquely; but when I covered him he was dashing straight up the hill before me. I felt that I had, as well as my own reputation, the honour of Old England and Joe Manton on the tip of my finger. I let Lupus get off to about 60 paces, when I fired. The ground was ploughed up right under his belly—he galloped on unhurt, but his fate was not to be eluded. He had not gone ten yards farther when I pulled the second trigger. The ball hit him right along the back, shatter'd the spine, and went clear through his neck. He tumbled over five or six times, and lay stretched dead upon the hill.

A shout of joy was his requiem from the whole party, with one exception. That was Lizier, who looked sullenly on, and hammered his flint with an air of utter vexation. As I re-loaded, Ranger looked up for permission to go forward to examine the defunct. I gave him a

consenting nod, and he cantered off, but returned with his tail between his legs after a single glance, frightened at the grim look of the dead enemy. Simon Guilloteaux jumped with joy, threw up his straw hat into the air, and vociferated many compliments to me and my Joe Manton.

I remarked to Claude that his friend Lizier did not seem to partake in Simon's pleasure.

"I don't wonder at that, Sir," said he; "his black spiteful heart is sore wounded: it was he who denounced Caribert as his father's murderer."

My disquiet at the sight of the fellow, when I heard this, took away for a moment my enjoyment in the attack on the bears, which immediately followed my feat of skill. But the vigour of the combat quickly absorbed my attention. Men and dogs advanced with equal courage, and their superiority soon decided the affair. The bears were all killed after a hard

struggle; and with only the loss of two dogs, who fell in the first onset, and a few slight scratches and bruises, distributed in fair proportions between the captain and four of his most ardent associates.

The work of slaughter lasted but a short time; and when the last of the bears was despatched, a loud concert of triumph burst forth in shouts, blowing of horns, firing of guns and barking of dogs. The hunters began to drag the carcases up into the plain; the wolf was brought down and thrown beside his companions in death; and each combatant began to examine the various wounds of the victims, recognizing those he had himself inflicted; the whole party chatting over the rapid events of the battle.

There was certainly somewhat, beyond anything I had imagined or can describe, of savage interest in the scene. I felt a momentary repugnance to the very thought of fox or hare-hunt-

ing, and made an inward vow against the tamer sports of the field, which I have kept, just in the manner of a poet who forswears publishing, or a coquette who renounces flirtation after the first disappointment.

CHAPTER XI.

I PERCEIVED in the mean time, that Claude's observation had wandered from what was passing before us, in search of an object not evident to his eyes, but occupying all his mind. He looked out anxiously towards the lake; and after exchanging some rude civilities with the hunters, and making some enquiries concerning Caribert, of whom they all declared they had seen nothing, he and I proceeded in that direction; Moinard taking the way back to Mount Arbizon, to look after his flock and its shepherd.

Before we had advanced twenty paces in our several routes, Claude stopped short, called out suddenly, "There he goes, by Heaven!" or

rather an oath equivalent to that—and darted at full speed towards a corner of the wood through which the hunters had driven their prey. Moinard heard the exclamation, and turned round; the hunters saw Claude's rapid movement, and looked out anxiously; and I with emotions not easy to depict, strained my sight to catch a view of the unfortunate maniac, whose fate had so highly excited my curiosity and interest.

I gazed some time in vain, and had I not depended much on the accuracy of Claude's keen and accustomed eye, I should have supposed him to have been mistaken. He continued his rapid pace; and I at length observed a man rise from among the underwood which was intermixed with a group of low fir trees; and from his tottering gait as he advanced towards the hunters, I concluded (and my suppositions were afterwards confirmed) that he had fallen down from weakness at the moment he was observed by Claude.

This was indeed Caribert. I must not attempt to analyze my own sensations as I gazed on the deplorable figure he presented. The scene around me, the *precipice*, and the slaughtered bears weltering in their blood, were combinations well suited to such an apparition. But his appearance lank and haggard, his beard apparently the growth of several weeks, his dark hair matted with weeds and damped by the dew, his vestments torn against the branches and roots through which he had all night wandered; his worn-out mien and frame exhausted,—all this was unexpected and altogether shocking.

I could not help figuring to myself, before I saw him, a robust and active young madman, of terrible aspect and ferocious purpose. The first impression made by his appearance was that of enfeebled age, unqualified to sustain a struggle with a child. It was a subject over which a moralist or a hero might have equally wept without reproach. There was not one of

the hunters who did not shew such symptoms of compassion as their rough natures admitted; and even Moinard who stood beside me, was touched by the woeful picture on which we gazed.

Claude was soon joined by two or three of the hunters, and as they advanced together towards Caribert, I observed Aline following on foot the steps of the wanderer, until she saw the group that approached to meet him; when she stopped and turned into the wood, as if abashed by the presence of such a company. I pointed her out to her father, who immediately descended towards her, and passing by the skirt of the hollow near which the hunters were scattered, soon made himself observed by her, and soon received her morning embrace. I could not rest alone, a distant spectator of the scene, but descended to the level ground, along which Caribert was slowly moving.

As Claude and the others got near him, he spoke, but I could only distinguish the sound of

his hoarse and hollow voice: the words were inarticulate. The group soon surrounded him, and it was not long before I joined them. I made my way close up to him, and strove to catch his incoherent and scarcely audible discourse. Nothing could be more discursive or unconnected than what he said. He had evidently lost all remembrance of the faces about him; and though his rambling thoughts were full of fancies connected with his former companions, he scarcely in one instance applied them rightly. The only one indeed which bore any direct meaning, even in a superstitious sense, was when addressing Louis Lizier; starting off from some rhapsody which no one comprehended, his mind seemed to catch a sudden glimpse of the past, and he turned with great vivacity to Lizier, who leaned upon his fusil close by, and regarded him with a lowering gaze.

"You know it, don't you?" said he, briskly seizing Lizier by the arm, "You saw it? You

watched them while they fell, and heard them crash down through the trees and rocks, and listened to their groans! It will be said I pushed them over, but you will hurl perdition on the heads of the false villains—I depend on you."

The fierce energy with which this was uttered, the conscience-struck expression of Lizier's countenance, and the astonished looks of the surrounding men, were most striking. The listeners seemed to consider the random words of the maniac as the utterance of an oracle, and there was something awful attached to their coincidence with fact, from the superstition that believes a madman's recognition of one who has injured him to be a sure announcement of a violent death to such person.

Is was clear to me that Caribert did not recognize the culprit whom he thus addressed. But neither Lizier nor his comrades were of my opinion, and the awe with which they all seemed impressed, was a fine lesson of human weakness, and not a slight proof of the value of

superstition for the government of that class over which it is the best, because the most natural instrument. I deliberately say this at the risk of drawing down the censures of all the Theophilanthropists upon me.

The blood which covered some of the hunters now caught the observation of Caribert. The lassitude and fatigue by which he at first appeared bowed down, gave way all at once to a sudden burst of animation. He snatched a spear from the hand of one of the men next to him, and brandishing it over his head, he shouted hoarsely, "To the chase, to the chase!" His emaciated limbs shook with nervous agitation, and he hurried on through the files formed by the hunters, who fell back as he advanced, and offered no obstacle to his progress. As he rushed on, shouting and waving the spear, his eye fixed on one of the slaughtered bears—he paused an instant, and then with a furious expression of countenance, and a violent effort at utterance which his hoarseness rendered vain, he

flung himself on the body of the dead animal. He took it up in his arms with a strength that appeared gigantic—and dashing it then furiously against the ground, he seemed at once to lose all power, and fell down upon it, exhausted and apparently lifeless.

He was completely besmeared with the blood, and was altogether the most appalling object I had ever beheld. He was raised up quite unresistingly by his friends. Aline and Moinard approached, and she gave directions concerning him, which were promptly obeyed. A rude litter of pine branches covered with heath was quickly constructed, and the poor wretch laid upon it and borne on the shoulders of four of his companions. Three others walked beside it, with Claude, Alme and myself; and while she held one of his hands, and kept steady her hood which she threw over him, we occasionally relieved each other in the task of carrying him. Guilloteaux, with the remainder of the hunters, staid behind to secure the spoils: Moinard

finally set out for his destination, and Lizier was observed to steal silently off with his dog into the wood.

As we advanced in the direction of Madame Larcole's cottage, our unfortunate burthen raved wildly, but with great exhaustion, and evidently with a pleased impression on his mind. We could collect from his scattered phrases that he fancied he had killed the bear, and that it was the identical one which had destroyed his father. This idea of having revenged his parent's death, and redeemed his own character, seemed to affect him powerfully, yet mildly. The easy exercise of the litter harmonized with the subdued tone of his feelings, and the languor of his frame; and he soon dropped into a slumber which continued till we reached his house.

During our march Aline told us of her discovering him soon after day-break, lying almost fainting in the wood near which I had first observed him. She had revived him with the

simple remedy of some snow from one of those heaps which lie in the crevices of the hills, and which melting away little by little as the season advances, appear from a distance like straggling lambs that repose in the sheltered nooks of their wild pasture-grounds. He did not recollect her, but received her assistance calmly; and as soon as he recovered himself proceeded without any apparent object, wandering about, until he heard the shots fired by the hunters, and their shouts as they advanced. At these signals his nerves seemed new braced, and his mind inflamed afresh. He pushed forward with encreased energy, following the well-remembered sounds of the chase; and at length entangling himself at each step of his hurried progress, he fell repeatedly, until with strength almost entirely exhausted, he reached the spot where Claude's quick glance perceived him. Aline was left behind in her pursuit. The intricacy of the wood had obliged her to abandon her pony in the place where she first fell in with

Caribert; and from fatigue and agitation, she appeared very nearly as much in want of support as the helpless object of her care.

When, after a long and painful walk across the hills, we reached the term of our expedition, we were met by the poor mother. She told us, weeping, that she had been obliged to return from her attempt at pursuit, the evening before, almost immediately after Caribert had left the house; for having lost sight of him it was in vain to continue it; and that the young man who followed him, when Claude went across to Moinard's, had been equally unable to keep sight of him after nightfall. He had relinquished the attempt after some hours' efforts, and had, as soon as the morning dawned, returned to inform her: and then gone in search of Claude, in order to join him in a new attempt.

The poor old woman wept bitterly as she gazed on her son. She had, at first sight of his motionless form extended on the rude resemblance of a bier, believed him to be dead. Her

expressions of sorrow, even on being assured of his existence, were heart-rending. She accused herself with unsparing invective as the cause of this desperate relapse, in not having better guarded him, and prayed a hundred times that death might snatch her from the observation of his misery and suffering. Yet he did not then appear to suffer much. He was quietly laid on his bed, and seemed insensible to pain. His fever was, notwithstanding, most violent; his skin was burning hot, and his lips and mouth parched up. A couple of old neighbours soon joined the mother in the care of the patient; the doctor was sent for to the town six miles distant; and every measure in the mean time taken to give such relief as the innocent herbal preparations of nature's pharmacopeia afforded.

He talked incessantly, always in the same strain of satisfaction at having revenged his father's death; and the old women, one and all, pronounced that the happy turn of feeling caused by this belief, must operate wonders for his

cure. I was standing close by his bed when the ancient triumvirate pronounced their joint opinion; Claude and Aline were near me, and I watched them well. He coloured red, and then turned pale, laid hold of a chair that was beside him, cast his eyes down, aud appeared to shrink from the observation which he looked conscious of having attracted. Whether he was shocked at the discovery he made of his own thoughts, or whether these were, or were not, of a nature so to affect him, it would be hard to say; but I fancied I read the proofs of a first sensation of astonished disappointment, in the sentence of recovery pronounced on Caribert, and an after-feeling of remorse at the self-acknowledgment of such a sensation.

A thousand pages of explanation could not describe the appearance of Aline. There never was a more pure display of virtue and benevolence. There was an utter absence of every sign by which selfishness betrays itself; unless,

indeed, selfishness may exist in the sublime devotion by which one mind identifies itself with another, and makes the joys and sorrows of a beloved object its own.

The remainder of the party who watched round Caribert's bed, received with a profound expression of pleasure the sybil-like announcement of his progressive recovery; I know not exactly what my own sensations were; but so deeply interested was I in what I considered the real welfare of Aline, so highly did I regard Claude as connected with it, so little had I personally seen of Caribert, and consequently so faint was my attachment to him in comparison with the others, that I am afraid I did not fully sympathise in the warm hopes and happiness by which I was surrounded. I had looked upon him from the first moment as lost to the world. He seemed to bear the stamp of death on his debilitated frame; and I thought I saw a sepulchral glassiness in his eye, which shone like

the cold reflexion of a mirror lighted by a midnight lamp.

We persuaded Aline to take possession of Madame Larcole's bed, and get a few hours repose; and I with the rest of the party retired from the house to share, in front of it, such refreshment as our flasks and havresacks afforded. That business settled, Claude turned his steps towards home, and proposed to me to accompany him. I was glad of the opportunity to see his sisters, and still more so to have some conversation with him alone on the subject of Caribert's expected recovery.

I began this latter topic by expressing my doubts of it. Claude shook his head with an involuntary expression which seemed to say, "It is too true." He did not quite utter the words, but from his reply it was easy to see how perfectly the natural desire of his own happiness had got the mastery over romantic feelings for the unfortunate sufferer who had so

deeply injured it. He said it was a shocking thing to wish for the death of any one; that Aline's well-being was every thing to him, that he was willing to make any sacrifice of his own hopes to ensure her peace of mind: but I saw through all this that poor Claude, perhaps, without knowing it, was any thing but cordially gratified by the prospect of Caribert's recovery. Seeing this, and my opinion (whatever my wishes might be) strongly inclining to a belief that he lay on his death-bed, I told Claude that I thought there was but little chance for him. He again shook his head, "God knows, Sir," said he, "it will be all for the best, happen what will; but if Mariette, the fat old woman in the hood and blue boddice pronounces for his recovery, it is as sure as the day that shines on us."

"She certainly said so," replied I, "and repeated it a moment before we left the house. You have an opinion of her skill?"

"She is the wonder of the whole country,

Sir. She never went wrong either as midwife or physician; and has more knowledge in her little finger, than Doctor Bourmont in his big head. But who have we here ?" added my companion, looking down a little ravine on my left hand. I looked in the same direction, and perceived, to my utter surprise, my dandy countryman (whom I had supposed snugly snoring in Aline's bed) toiling up the rugged bank of the ravine, and piloted by no other guide than my last night's friend, the goatherd, who had much the appearance of one recovering from a debauch, without the assistance of hock and soda water. His protegé, the dandy, looked all on fire. His face was as red as his head; his eyes were bloodshot; I am sure that could his feelings have been subjected to visual examination, they would have appeared flame-coloured. He swore like a trooper, and burst up through the briars with terrible explosions of indignation; but made just about as much way towards the top as could be expected

from a living image of the stone of Sisyphus. He was really a lamentable spectacle. The place was quite irrigated by the springs, which had burst out and flowed down the sides of the hill, and he laboured through a bed of weeds and mud. On every bramble he passed, up or down, he left a remnant of his coat, as naturally as the sheep who were in the habit of going the same rough path. His white pantaloons were slit into an accurate copy of the slashed breeches of other days. His Spanish-leather boots were torn to fritters. He had irretrievably lost his hat; and his smart frock-coat having been totally despoiled of its skirts, was by this summary process converted into a nondescript kind of vestment between a jacket and a spencer, most horridly unbecoming to his lengthy limbs and their unfleshly appurtenances.

> "The suburbs of his jacket being gone,
> He had not left a skirt to sit upon."

"My good Sir," cried I, offering him my

hand, as with desperate contortions he looked upwards for the twentieth time, "what could have induced you to take such a path?"

On hearing the sound of his own original mother tongue, which, in this unguarded moment I inconsiderately spoke, he made a full stop; and formed with his wide-stretched legs, and the ground he stood on, a gigantic figure of an equilateral triangle, his body standing up in a right line from its utmost apex.

"Heaven and earth!" cried he at length, "are you an Englishman? I'll be d——d if I did not take you last night for a frog-eater."

Recollecting myself immediately, and being resolved not to acknowledge our national relationship (which was somewhat more distant than he imagined), I replied with a shrug—

"I speak a little English, Saer."

"Why you had none of that cursed *dis* and *dat* accent just now," said he, eyeing me keenly.

"I speak not mosh, Saer," said I, with a grimace.

"Umph!" muttered he, "well, give me your hand, any how, and lug me out of this infernal morass."

I tugged hard, and he struggled bravely, but he had stuck ancle-deep, and his long spurs held him as fast at anchor as a seventy-four gun ship off the North Foreland. With the help of Claude (the goatherd being quite unfit for service from violent fits of laughter), I at length succeeded in digging out the Dandy; and we dragged him up to the bank all in a foam, rivers of sweat pouring down his hollow cheeks, and dripping along his mustachios, which were thus brought into two fine points below his chin, and performed their only possible office of use or ornament, as perspiration conductors.

After a proper proportion of puffing and blowing, necessary to put him into wind, his first object was to inflict due chastisement on the grinning goatherd, who, he swore, had led him to this defile to have him conveniently

robbed and murdered, and whose malice spoke plainly in his looks. Away, therefore, he darted at full speed after the youngster, who seeing his intention, took to his heels, and led him for five minutes as pretty a little chace as could be, in a circle of about fifty yards diameter, twisting and turning from his open-mouthed and long legged pursuer, with the adroitness of a hare baffling a greyhound on the Yorkshire wolds. It was certainly good sport; and the Dandy himself could not help laughing, when, quite done up, he was obliged to fling himself down, and the young dog came smiling up, and demanded payment for his services. Native generosity extinguished the dandy's remaining ire; and the goatherd received in his outstretched hand the flat slap of a piece of money, that made him stare as if he would have swallowed it.

I saw that Claude was now desirous of getting to his home; and my anxiety lying more in a retrograde direction, I suffered him to set

off alone, saying that I would take care to put my coatless countryman upon the right track for the recovery of his pony. Claude therefore set out; promising to be at Caribert's cottage in the evening; and the disbanded guide trotted away joyously on nearly the same route.

When we were left to ourselves, my new companion poured out his complaints in no milkiness of mood. He swore that the Spaniards had stolen his horse, and that Moinard was leagued with them in the theft. This was proved, he said, beyond a doubt, by his absconding during the night; but was nothing in comparison to the villainous bill of charges, which he left ready made out with Mannette, to be presented as soon as he was stirring in the morning. The items of this account being rather curious specimens of mountain orthography as well as imposition, I shall give a transcript of it here for the benefit of my readers, faithfully taken and done into English, from the

bit of white-brown paper on which it was scribbled, in my friend Moinard's most-difficultly-to-be-decyphered scrawl.

Memoire pr. M. l' Angle.	fr.	c.	*Translation. English Gentleman's Bill.*	fr.	c.
Lis	5	0	Bed	5	0
Ganard pr. gon soupait	4	50	Duck for his supper	4	50
Fromage id		25	Cheese do:		25
Pin beurt let id	1	75	Bread, butter, milk do.	1	75
Aumlette id	2	0	Omelette, do.	2	0
Vin 3 bouts.	3	0	Wine, three bottles	3	0
Quafi	1	25	Coffee	1	25
Au d' Vis avec Messrs. lez Espanaules............	7	0	Brandy with the Spanish gentlemen	7	0
Chavail, foine avauine......	3	0	Horse's hay and oats.......	3	0
	fr. 27	75		fr. 27	75

I endeavoured to appease the Dandy, who confessed that (on reflecting that such travellers as he formed the only harvest of the poor mountaineers, and must, therefore, expect to be cut down without mercy) he did not care much for paying a guinea or two for a day's sport, that few people saw so much of a country at so cheap a price; and in fact, that he would have been well satisfied, and in very good humour after all his losses, but for the blackguard robbery committed upon him in the person of his pony.

On this tender point I soon tranquillized him, by assuring him of the animal's safety, answering for the truth of Moinard's assertion that his daughter had rode him away in search of her lover; and by finally pointing out the cottage, where both daughter and lover were at that very moment.

"There, are they?" cried he, "then, by the Lord, Monsieur, I'll go and have a peep at them."

I remonstrated on the score of his tattered appearance, and recommended his accompanying me to Moinard's, to recover his pony and set off for Bagnères, the place whence he came. To this he objected, assuring me that although he had lost the skirts of his coat, he still had the pockets of his pantaloons, and wherewithal in them to make him welcome wherever he went, and that probably he had the will, as well as the means, to heal the heart-sores of the girl and her sweetheart. Upon this hint I turned with him towards Caribert's lowly dwell-

ing; and though I did not think very highly of the efficacy of his remedy for the case in question, I did not fail to cultivate the kind feelings which I saw spontaneously rising through the rough soil of his independent spirit.

At Madame Larcole's he was not gratified by a sight of either Caribert or Aline. They both slept soundly; but the old woman made her appearance; and the Dandy was so touched by the picture I had sketched of the distresses around him, that he began counting down his Napoleons to the wonder-stricken mother so fast, that I was really obliged to hold his hand, seeing that his heart was outstripping the prudence with which all hearts ought to travel side by side. Seven or eight of these golden gifts remained in the firmly-shut hand of Madame Larcole, whose fingers seemed to close as naturally upon them, as the feelers of some animals fasten on their food. But as her hand closed her heart opened, from some occult nervous action, I suppose, and she began the ex-

pression of her gratitude in terms which the Dandy was too sensitive to endure. I saw very plainly that he did not want thanks, and he begged of me to hurry off with him towards Moinard's, that he might escape from the trouble of receiving praises and blessings. We set off accordingly, and I was really so much impressed with a favourable opinion of him, that I could no longer resist acknowledging my country. I got out of the scrape of my having imposed myself on him for a Frenchman, by telling him it was my object to be thought so while I travelled in these wild parts. He was too well satisfied at finding that I came from so near home with him, to feel any annoyance on the score of my harmless deceit, and threw out many jocose hints as to my motives, which it is unnecessary to repeat.

He marched manfully with me to Moinard's, notwithstanding that his boots and his silk stockings were fairly worn from his feet. He was a fine proof of what good mettle can do in

these cases; and he disdained to own himself knocked up when he arrived. We beguiled the way by various efforts to be agreeable to each other. At his request, I threw into the rough imitation formerly given to the reader, the sense of the song sung by the Spaniards. He in his turn confessed himself a bit of a geologist. I looked amazingly profound and marbley, as if I had been a chip of the same block, as he avowed his great disappointment in not having been able to pursue his search after Schistus, and Euphodite, and Thonschiefer, and Quadersandstain — and Heaven knows how many other varieties, of which I was only puzzled to know how he could remember the names, or who could have invented them.

Arrived at the cottage, we got from Moinard a straw hat and an old cloak wherewith to cover his raggedness, and for which he paid double their original value; he then discharged his bill, mounted his pony; squeezed my hand;

gave a hearty damn or two to all mountain districts and roguish mountaineers; and set off in a gentle canter towards Bagnères—the tattered remains of one boot and its brass spur trailing upon the road, like the ill-fastened drag-chain of a stage-coach.

CHAPTER XII.

I PASSED the remainder of the day with Moinard, talking over the events of the morning, and collecting from him many of the particulars which I have already woven into my narrative of previous occurrences. I gave up my original plan of returning to Caribert's, thinking that my presence would be but useless. I occupied the bed evacuated by my countryman; my host, as usual on such occasions, turned into a pallet under one of the sheds; and Mannette, in the natural course of promotion, crept between the blankets to which the night before she had served as a coverlid.

I never slept so soundly. The extreme

fatigue of the last two days, the effects of a heavy supper, consisting chiefly of a rich ragout of izard-flesh seasoned strongly with garlic, and the soporific qualities of two large glasses of brandy-and-water, all combined to hold me fast to my mattress, until late in the morning; when I was aroused by a clatter in the kitchen, between Mannette, her eagle and her izard, who were all breakfasting together; the clamorous demands of her two pets mingling with her shrill voice, which was going its ordinary course of hearty laughter.

I started up, opened my window, gazed out on the magnificent prospect of mountain scenery before me, and forgot, for a moment, in contemplating nature on this grand scale, how much of human suffering was contained in the narrow compass of poor Caribert's cottage. Recalled to the train of thinking in which my nine hours' dreamless sleep had made so wide a gap, I was soon ready to join Moinard in a visit of enquiry to Madame Larcole, both of us being anxious

to know the state of her poor son, but not exactly from the same motives.

We started together and paid a passing visit to Claude's sisters, as I was curious to see the various persons connected with all I had been hearing so much about. Claude was gone off to the spot where all his hopes and fears were centered. The girls were all at home, neat and respectable, but differing in nothing from the homely inhabitants of the hills, excepting that Jeanneton had rather a more lively eye than the others, and a rosier tinge mantling in her dark brown cheeks. They appeared all in low spirits, and Catrine, the eldest, had some conversation in an under tone with Moinard, which seemed sensibly to disturb him.

He appeared anxious to quit the cottage, and soon after we had taken our leave, he told me that Claude, on his return home the night before from his second visit to Caribert, had announced that the doctor who had seen him coincided perfectly with the old women, that he

was in a way of rapid recovery both of health and reason.

"Bad news that, Sir, both for Claude and me; and what a prospect for my poor girl!"

"Why let's see, Mr. Moinard," said I. "It is clear to me she is doatingly attached to this unfortunate Caribert. I know something of the human heart, and believe me, if he recovers, as they say he will, you may yet see your daughter very happy as his wife."

"Ah! never, Sir, never—you don't know her heart, or her head either. Supposing even that he did quite recover, let me tell you that he has not a franc in the world, but the poor pittance he could make by his hunting."

"That consideration would not weigh much with Aline," said I. "But it weighs very heavy with me, let me tell you," retorted he quickly; "and she has promised me never to marry him."

"Well, well, my friend," replied I, "it is

useless to guess at what may happen; but I recommend you to make up your mind for the chance of all these promises being broken."

"But suppose, even," exclaimed he after a few minutes' thought,—"suppose even he shouldn't recover his wits, is there any chance of her marrying Claude?"

"Not the least," answered I, although it was clear the question was put to himself rather than to me. "I think not too," said he with a heavy sigh; and we spoke no more till we crossed Madame Larcole's threshold.

"Ah! this is kind of you, my dear Mr. Moinard," cried the old woman, receiving us at the door, and kissing her neighbour on either cheek—"very kind indeed, to come up and join in all our happiness." "How is Caribert getting on?" asked he, freeing himself gently from the arms of the mother.

"Miraculously well!" replied she. "He has had such a night as he has not passed,

poor fellow, for many and many a long month."

"Indeed!" muttered Moinard. "Where is my daughter?"

"Here I am, my father," said Aline in a soft tone, stepping from the little inner room where Caribert lay, and giving me a smile as she passed. She had at this time an expression of countenance entirely new. It was a mixture of all that was most delightful in an ardent mind, benevolence, high hope, and gratitude to Heaven.

"How is he now, Aline?" asked Moinard, while she embraced him.

"Oh much, much better," replied she; "he advances, thank God! most rapidly; Doctor Bourmont has just been here, and expects every thing from the crisis that is coming on, and so does Mariette. In two days more his fate will be decided: that is, his mental recovery will, please Heaven, take place. That view of the bear yesterday morning, and the blessed notion it inspired, is the date of all our hopes. Three

days, they say, must pass before the positive change, because the moon will enter a new quarter then—only till the day after to-morrow! My dear father!" She here threw her arms again round her father's neck, and could not restrain her tears.

"Ah! Aline," said he, "it is a sad thing when that which makes a daughter weep for joy, is near bringing tears of sorrow into the eyes of her old father."

"My dearest father," exclaimed Aline, "think of the poor sufferer that lies in that little room."

"What!" said he—"and forget the fine fellow walking out there in the garden?" and he here pointed to Claude through the window.

The looks which kept time with this short colloquy, gave it a character of considerable eloquence and feeling. It ended here, for Aline softly withdrew herself from her father's embrace, and retreated towards the chamber of the invalid. Moinard walked out into the gar-

den, to talk with Claude and keep up his spirits, in his rough way of giving condolence. I sought the old woman, in order to gather what I could as to the actual state of Caribert's mind. They had nothing new to communicate. He had continued in the same tranquil state in which I left him; and slept profoundly the whole day and night, which (I agreed with his nurses) was caused by an effort of nature to shake off the fever that had before oppressed him.

I asked if I might see him, and the permission was rapidly granted. I entered the room carefully; and saw Aline sitting on a chair near his bed, watching his placid countenance. He was still sleeping, and the smile on Aline's lips seemed caught from that which played round his; and as far as might be judged from the expression of a face, with eyes closed, and almost concealed by his beard, his mind in its dawning state was revelling in happy fancies.

After some time I joined Moinard and Claude

in the garden, and the former told me the subject of their conversation. It consisted of resolutions on the part of Claude, met by dissuasion from Moinard, finally to arrange his former plans, and leave the neighbourhood, when Caribert's recovery should be decidedly pronounced. Invited to give my opinion as an umpire between them, I thought it would be an act of unkindness to poor Claude, not to confess that I fully agreed with him. It was quite evident to my disinterested observation, that by delaying near Aline, he was only hoarding up new stores of misery for himself; for I saw enough of her to make up my mind, that as soon as Caribert recovered, the whole barrier against their union would give way, although it had been made up of materials a thousand times stronger than it was.

Announcing this opinion as calmly as I could, I saw that Claude was almost struck dumb with disappointment to find it tally with his own. He had wished to hear it, had appealed to me

for it, and saw that it was just—but he hoped all the while to be deceived, and wished so without knowing it. But Moinard was at last beginning to come round to my way of thinking. He now, for the first time, confessed his fears that my opinion might be prophetic, and would have suffered much more keenly on the occasion than he did, had not a new light seemed to break in upon him all at once.

After some time spent in round-about ways of coming at the expression of this new notion, he exclaimed "Why you see, Claude, it is useless to repine, if Heaven ordains that you must give up your hopes of Aline. It is not every shot that brings down the bird we aim at.—Don't be offended Claude, you are a sportsman, and you know that the net that lets one rabbit loose may hold another fast. I know very well how truly you love the girl, and you know how much we all love you;—Mannette and myself, I might say, much better than Aline. Now I was just thinking that after a year's fretting or

so, if the worst come to the worst, you might brighten up a little, and look about you again. I don't want to flatter you, Claude, but you know how I wished for you as a son-in-law, and who knows what may happen yet? It is not for me to praise my own child, and she's nothing but a child now, to be sure;—but a year will soon pass over, and then, you see, Mannette will be sixteen or thereabouts—and a nice comely lass I'll engage for it—and who knows what may happen, after all?" He here ventured to look up in Claude's face for the first time since he began his oration. Claude had stared at him all through it, without comprehending what he would be at; but discovering his meaning at length, he only shook his head and replied. "Mr. Moinard, Mr. Moinard, you don't know what you are talking about, or what I feel." With these words he walked away; but after one or two turns in the garden he rejoined us, announcing his intention of moving homewards. Moinard said he would accompany him, and

explain what he meant on the road; they walked off together.

As for me, I was resolved to remain where I was, and I made the excuse of my want of occupation, and my wish to be of service in case a male assistant might in any way be wanted; for the men had all gone off, one by one, to their several homes. I was, in fact, much interested in the progress of Caribert's recovery; for independent of my delight in observing the movements of Aline's feelings, I felt the chance of remarking so extraordinary an occurrence, as a rare piece of good fortune to a person of my pursuits; for though not one of the faculty, I had followed the study of moral diseases wherever I chanced to find them—and where have I not?

I therefore loitered about the house; entered it occasionally; chatted with the old woman whose favour I had completely gained, in a great measure, through the generosity of my

countryman; I conversed now and then with Aline, and watched the proofs of her beautiful disposition in her looks; for she had not many words at command. While she, and I, and two of the old women, were taking our dinner of onion-soup and sallad, which every body ate with that fine appetite given us by hope, and the third nurse sitting by Caribert's bed, the trotting of Doctor Bourmont's horse announced his visit, and he soon alighted and entered the room. He was a short thin man, of extremely nervous appearance, and rather timid manner. He addressed himself respectfully to Mariette, and enquired the state of his patient. She replied that he went on marvellously well.

"Still sleeping?"

"Oh! always, Sir—"

"So much the better—Don't you think so, Mariette?"

"To be sure I do, Doctor; that's all he wants."

"Has he taken the ptisan?"

"Bless your heart, Sir, no; how could he in his sleep?"

"Ah! very true—let me see him."

We here all entered the sick room after the Doctor. He proceeded cautiously to feel his patient's pulse, first proclaiming his looks all for the better. While he felt the pulse with a most profound expression of countenance, Aline's eyes watched him with inexpressible eagerness. When he withdrew his hand from Caribert's wrist and said "All's right, all's right, his fever is gone, and we may pronounce him quite well;" she could no longer restrain herself, but uttering an exclamation of "thank God, thank God!" she burst into an hysteric laugh, and putting her hands to her face, she rushed out of the room.

At the sound of her voice Caribert opened his eyes, stared wildly round, and said faintly, "That was Aline!" She heard his words—stepped back involuntarily into the room, and

looked upon him He fixed his eyes on her a moment, raised his hand towards her, and sunk again into sleep.

"It is enough" said the Doctor, "his reason has returned."

Aline sobbed almost to suffocation, the poor mother threw herself on her knees, and wept and prayed incoherently; the old women chorussed all she said, with loud expressions of felicitation; I could not trust myself any longer in the infection of the general weakness, but accompanied the Doctor to his horse, held his bridle while he mounted, and performed the civilities of the house as he slowly trotted away. Seeing how much I made myself at home at the cottage, he begged of me to have great care taken that Caribert was kept perfectly tranquil, for although his recovery was certain it was not complete, and he might be driven into relapse by any premature agitation. In obedience to his prudential wishes, I returned to the attendant group, and they all agreed too fully with the

Doctor's views, not to observe his orders strictly. It was arranged that they should watch one by one, regularly relieving each other; but that no two were to be together in his room, to avoid the possibility of his being disturbed by conversation. His mother commenced her hour's watching, and was succeeded by the others with great regularity.

Old Mariette, who was looked up to as the regulator of every thing concerning the patient, said that all went on well except one point. He breathed freely and slept soundly, but she did not like his not asking to drink. "If he would but take of that ptisan," said she emphatically, "it would act like magic on him!" Knowing the sacredness of devotion in which such diet-drinks are held by the French of all classes and distinctions, from the duchess down to the monthly nurse, and having myself neither predilection nor prejudice for or against those wishey-washey preparations, I paid but little attention to Mariette's anxiety.

Midnight approached; and at last (his mother sitting by his bedside) the patient put his hand to his mouth, as if he would drink. His mother reported this to Mariette. "Heaven be praised," cried she, "I have now no fears for him."

We all, who sat round the fire, participated in her satisfaction at this decisive sign. He took a deep draught, seemed much refreshed, and dropped again into sleep.

All being now well, Aline took her turn of watch. We had been the whole evening endeavouring to persuade her to lie down and sleep, but she could not, as long as Mariette had any doubt of matters going rightly. She had therefore rejected all our solicitations, and it now having come to her turn she persisted in fulfilling her duty. She accordingly entered the chamber, and took her station on the low chair beside her Caribert's bed. She went into the room cheerful and animated. I felt my heart throb with more than common pleasure at

witnessing her happiness; and for a few short minutes I ran over in fancy the days of joy that I counted for her during the final recovery of her lover, and the bliss that I could not help believing destined for her as his faithful and beloved wife. The old women resumed their positions round the fire, and as I saw they were all, even their careful old Mariette, worn out with watching, I determined to take a stroll on the hill, and enjoy the silent beauties of the clear moonlight.

I walked thus, moralizing and poetizing for above an hour. True to that ever-working principle of egotism which leads the mind through all the labyrinths of analogy, back upon the home of its own selfishness, I ran over in that period the many recollections of my own chequered life, and planned and fancied matter enough for centuries to come. At last I began to feel chilly, and returned to the cottage. I entered cautiously, and found every thing wearing the same appearance as when I had

walked out, the old women in their unvaried postures, and all sound asleep. I crept softly towards Caribert's room, and saw that poor Aline had also yielded to the influence which in hours of woe and apprehension she could so easily resist, but which this short season of her happiness had so effectually disposed her to receive. Tired nature had sunk; she had quitted the chair, and sat on the floor beside the bed, her head upon it, her eyes just closed, and her senses all locked up. I returned to the outer room, took the chair which the old crones had left vacant for me in front of the fire, and infected by the examples of repose around me, after a short time I too began to doze away, and finally slept like my companions.

Were I to live for those centuries over which my thoughts had before been wandering, I could never forget the sound that woke me from that slumber—a shriek too horrid even to think of—or the sight that struck upon my eyes when I reached the place from whence the alarm

proceeded. I rushed into Caribert's room, and thought I saw a spectre. It was Aline—standing upright on the spot where I had left her sleeping, her face bloodless, her eyes staring like the gaze of madness, her hands holding up close to her heart the hand of Caribert. Believing her under the influence of a horrid vision, I caught her by the arm and shook her forcibly, but she was not dreaming. I touched the hand which she held in hers, but it was stiffened in the colder clasp of death. Caribert was no more. He had died while she slept by him. She awoke from her imperfect slumber, was startled by the death-like silence around her, heard no breath, caught his hand, and found it icy and motionless.

Such was his quiet, yet with all the circumstances of hope—of certainty even—I must say his terrible death. Reflection may tell me, it is true, that he died happy, that his last hours were solaced by the notion of having revenged his father's fate; and one flitting moment

sweetened by the sound of her voice whom he adored, and possibly by the shadowy glimpse of his recovered reason brightened by her sight. It is thus I wish my readers to reflect upon his exit; and I will not strive to strengthen any more painful impressions which may rise upon their minds. I therefore pass over the scene of suffering that followed this shocking and quite unlooked-for event. It is of little importance to know by what error of judgment the poor patient's disorder was mis-conceived, and its termination so sadly miscalculated. I shall leave his memory in the care of my readers, and pass to other subjects.

Not being willing to deal too hardly with poor human nature in its moments of trial, I never wished to enter deeply into the secret of Claude's momentaneous feeling when he first heard of Caribert's death. God knows what the best of us might have felt in his case, during the temptation which such a surprise held out to selfishness. But I saw him very soon

after. I saw him standing over his rival's death-bed—I saw him following him to his grave—a faithful portrait of disinterested sorrow. He wept over the friend of his youth, his companion and playmate, the man he had chosen for the husband of his sister, and the confidant of his own true passion. In this united character he mourned him bitterly; and I firmly believe that neither recollection nor resentment discoloured by one stain the picture he imaged to himself.

It may be well supposed that this genuine display of generosity and worth sank deep in Aline's heart. Would any of my readers have had her insensible to it, or have wished her to withhold its reward, and renounce the manifold chances of happiness which its participation offered to her sorrow-stricken heart? I wish, if there be any such, that they had seen her as I did about a year ago, with two fine boys hanging at her neck; her husband (the identical Claude) smiling beside them; and a look of

sober contentment settled on the face that I had so often seen agitated by deep woe.

Jeanneton carried on a long flirtation with Simon Guilloteaux, and was two or three times half tempted to jilt him; but good fortune triumphed over her frivolity, for during one of her moments of true feeling, apart from coquetry, he asked her seriously to marry him. She consented, was married, and is now, as Claude foretold, the steady and respectable wife of an honest, industrious man. Lizier, haunted by the superstitious presentiment of the fate which he believed decreed for him, threw himself as if by destiny into the way of a hundred dangers. He thus converted the chance-wanderings of insanity into a prophecy. He escaped all native risks, but he joined the French army which marched for the invasion of Spain, and was almost the first man who fell, in the furtherance of an enterprise as dark and treacherous as he who thus became one of its earliest victims.

Mannette is, I hope, by this time, happily married to a young man of Sarancolin, for there was great talk of such an event when I last visited the hills. Jeanneton's sister remained at that time single, and they assisted their old friend Aline to make Claude's cottage and native spot so happy to him, that I verily believe he would not now exchange it for the whole side of any other mountain, though it were covered with gold and precious stones.

THE END OF CARIBERT.

LONDON:
SHACKELL AND ARROWSMITH, JOHNSON'S COURT.

ERRATA.

Page 42, line 8, and all through the Tale, for *Larcole* read *Lareole*.

64, — 1, for *patrie* read *patria*.

—, — 4, for *nestro* read *nuestro*.

—, — 8, from the bottom, for *ignal* read *igual*.

84, — 7, from the bottom, for *Surancolin* read *Sarancolin*.

85, — 14, for *his* read *this*.

90, — 3, for *Carrigon* read *Canigou*.

106, — 8, for *Governie* read *Gavarnie*.

138, — 2, insert the word *bear* after *brown*.

156, — 2, for *sight* read *sigh*.

— — 5, from the bottom, for *mental* read *mortal*.